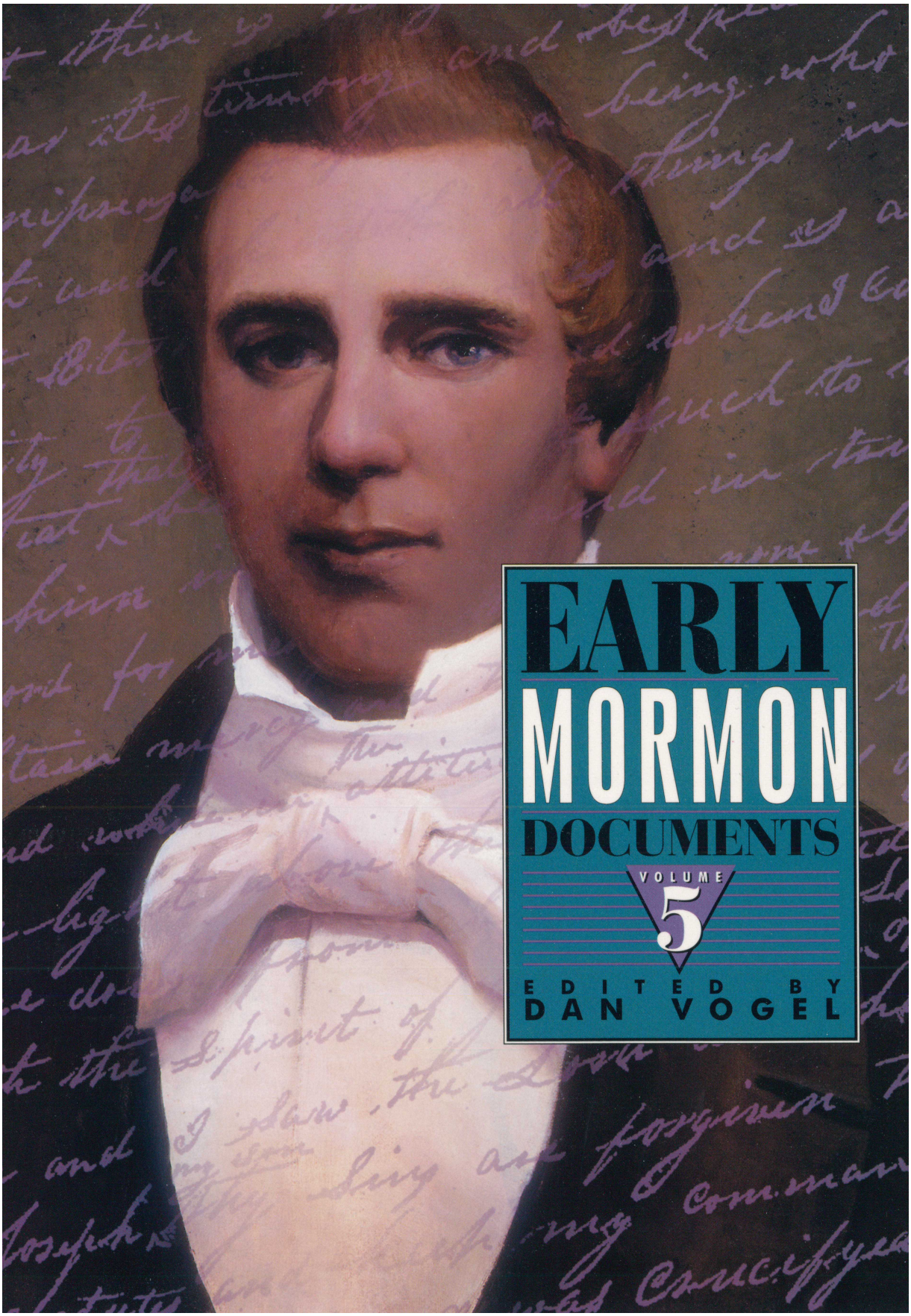

EARLY MORMON DOCUMENTS

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EDITED BY DAN VOGEL

EARLY MORMON DOCUMENTS

Volume v

COMPILED AND EDITED BY

DAN VOGEL

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CONTENTS

PART VI.
MORMON ORIGINS IN FAYETTE, NEW YORK

Introduction to Fayette, New York, Documents 3

A. DAVID WHITMER COLLECTION

Introduction to David Whitmer Collection 9
1. Eber D. Howe on David Whitmer, 1834 13
2. David Whitmer Interview with Eri B. Mullin, 1874 15
3. David Whitmer Interview with *Chicago Times,* August 1875 17
4. David Whitmer Interview with Thomas W. Smith, January 1876. 25
5. David Whitmer Interview with Edward Stevenson, 22-23 December 1877 28
6. David Whitmer Interview with P. Wilhelm Poulson, Circa April 1878 36
7. David Whitmer Interview with Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, 7-8 September 1878 41
8. J. L. Traughber to *Saints' Herald,* 13 October 1879 58
9. David Whitmer Interview with John Murphy, June 1880 62
10. E. S. Gilbert to Ellen E. Dickinson, 1 August 1880. 65
11. David Whitmer Proclamation, 19 March 1881 68
12. David Whitmer Interview with *Kansas City Journal,* 1 June 1881 72
13. David Whitmer to *Kansas City Journal,* 13 June 1881 81
14. David Whitmer Interview with *Chicago Times,* 14 October 1881 83
15. David Whitmer Interview with William H. Kelley and George A. Blakeslee, 15 December 1881 89
16. David Whitmer Interview with J. W. Chatburn, 1882 93
17. David Whitmer Interviews with James H. Hart, 21 August 1883 & 10 March 1884 95

18. David Whitmer Interview with George Q. Cannon, 27 February 1884 111
19. David Whitmer to E. L. Kelley, 3 March 1884 117
20. David Whitmer Interview with E. C. Briggs and R. Etzenhouser, 25 April 1884 119
21. David Whitmer Interview with Joseph Smith III and Others, July 1884 123
22. David Whitmer Interview with *St. Louis Republican,* July 1884 125
23. David Whitmer Interview with Unknown Reporter, Circa July 1884 133
24. David Whitmer Interview with Zenas H. Gurley, 14 January 1885 135
25. David Whitmer Interview with James Henry Moyle, 28 June 1885 139
26. David Whitmer Interview with *Chicago Tribune,* 15 December 1885 150
27. David Whitmer Interview with Edward Stevenson, 9 February 1886 159
28. David Whitmer Interview with Nathan Tanner, Jr., 13 May 1886 165
29. David Whitmer Interview with *Omaha* (NE) *Herald,* 10 October 1886 171
30. David Whitmer Interview with M. J. Hubble, November 1886 182
31. David Whitmer Interview with Edward Stevenson, 2 January 1887 185
32. David Whitmer to Anthony Metcalf, 2 April 1887 193
33. David Whitmer, *Address,* 1887 194
34. David Whitmer Interview with *Chicago Tribune,* 23 January 1888 209
35. David Whitmer Interview with *Richmond* (MO) *Democrat,* January 1888 211
David Whitmer Addendum 216

B. JOHN WHITMER COLLECTION

Introduction to John Whitmer Collection 231
1. John Whitmer History, Circa 1836–1838 233
2. John Whitmer Testimony, 1836 239

3. John Whitmer Testimony, 1839 240
4. John Whitmer to Mark H. Forscutt, 5 March 1876. 242
5. John Whitmer to Heman C. Smith, 11 December 1876 244
6. John Whitmer Testimony, 1878 245
7. John Whitmer Interview with P. Wilhelm Poulson, April 1878 247
John Whitmer Addendum. 250

C. MISCELLANEOUS WHITMER FAMILY COLLECTION

1. Hiram Page to William E. McLellin, 30 May 1847 255
2. Hiram Page to William E. McLellin, 2 February 1848 257
3. Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery Affidavit, 15 February 1870 . . 260
4. John C. Whitmer Interview with Andrew Jenson and Edward Stevenson, 11 October 1888 261

D. MISCELLANEOUS EARLY SOURCES

1. Lucius Fenn to Birdseye Bronson, 12 February 1830 267
2. Diedrich Willers to Reverend Brethren, 18 June 1830 270

E. MISCELLANEOUS LATE SOURCES

1. Diedrich Willers to Ellen E. Dickinson, 19 January 1882 281
2. Lee Yost to Diedrich Willers, Jr., 18 May 1897 287
3. Diedrich Willers, Jr., Historical Sketch, 1900 292
4. Harrison Chamberlain Reminiscence, 1903 296
5. Ernest L. Welch Account, 1904. 298

F. MISCELLANEOUS NON-RESIDENT SOURCES

1. David Marks Account, 1831 303
2. Sidney Rigdon to Ohio Saints, 4 January 1831. 305
3. Ezra Booth Accounts, 1831 308
4. William Scoby Obituary, 1834 311
5. Sidney Rigdon Reminiscence, 1844 312
6. Parley P. Pratt Autobiography (Part II), Circa 1854 316
7. Parley P. Pratt Reminiscence (Part II), 1856. 320
8. Orson Pratt Account, 1858 322
9. Orson Pratt Account, 1859 325
10. William E. McLellin to Joseph Smith III, July & September 1872 327
11. *History of Seneca County* (NY), 1876 331
12. J. L. Traughber to [James T. Cobb?], Circa 1881 333

13. David Lewis Reminiscence, 1908 336
14. J. L. Traughber Account, No Date 340

G. MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS

1. Testimony of Three Witnesses, June 1829 345
2. Far West Record, 9 June 1830, 26 September 1830, & 2 January 1831 348
3. Joseph Smith, Sr., Priest's License, 9 June 1830 352
4. Christian Whitmer Teacher's License, 9 June 1830 355
5. John Whitmer Elder's License, 9 June 1830 357
6. Edward Partridge Elder's License, 15 December 1830 359

APPENDIX A: EARLY CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN NEW YORK . . 363
APPENDIX B: CHRONOLOGY, 1771-1831 377
BIBLIOGRAPHY 457

Illustrations

1. Fayette, Seneca County, New York (map) 2
2. David Whitmer (photograph) 8
3. John Whitmer (portrait) 230
4. Peter Whitmer farm site, 1907 (photograph) 280
5. Seneca Lake, 1907 (photograph) 302
6. Christian Whitmer Teacher's License, 1830 (photograph) 354

PART VI.

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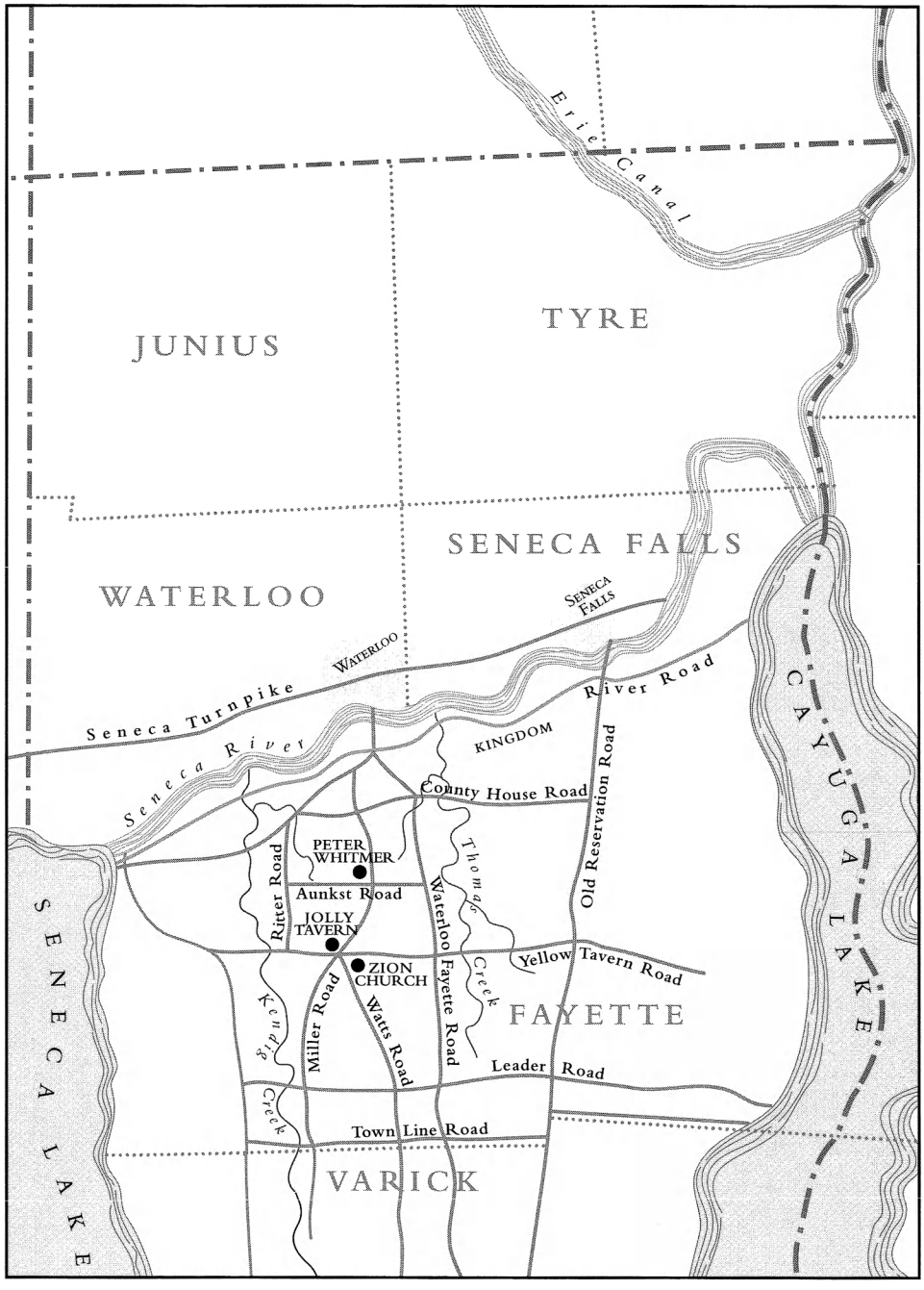
Mormon Origins in Fayette, NEW YORK



Map of Fayette, Seneca County, New York.

INTRODUCTION TO FAYETTE, NEW YORK, DOCUMENTS

If Fayette, New York, is incorrectly believed by many to be the location of the LDS church's organization on 6 April 1830 (see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 82), it is nevertheless the scene of other important events: the Book of Mormon's completion, reception of numerous revelations, and three church conferences, to name a few. A largely rural area situated below the Erie Canal about twenty-two miles directly east of Palmyra, with Seneca and Cayuga Lakes on either side, Fayette was home to Peter Whitmer, Sr., whose generosity was invaluable to the growth of Mormonism. Peter first heard about Joseph Smith through his son David, who had met Oliver Cowdery in Palmyra in 1828 and conversed with him about Smith's discovery of gold plates (VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881). In April the next year, Cowdery and Samuel Smith visited the Whitmer family on their way to Harmony, Pennsylvania, where Joseph Smith was struggling with the translation of the Book of Mormon. Before leaving Fayette, Cowdery promised to write Whitmer concerning his investigation of Smith's activities in Harmony.

About mid-April 1829, Whitmer received a letter from Cowdery that praised Smith's seeric gifts. In a second letter, Cowdery quoted a few lines from the Book of Mormon translation. In a third letter he told Whitmer that they were experiencing persecution in Harmony and requested sanctuary in Fayette for him and Smith (VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878; VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881; VI.A.17, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH JAMES H. HART, 21 AUG 1883 & 10 MAR 1884). Whitmer hitched a wagon and drove to Harmony about 1 June and conveyed Smith and Cowdery to Fayette (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 21).

In the upper story of the Peter Whitmer, Sr., home, work on the Book of Mormon continued until about the end of June. That same month, Hyrum Smith, David Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jr., and probably John Whitmer were baptized in nearby Seneca Lake. Smith also visited Palmyra to negotiate and arrange for the Book of Mormon's publication. In the latter part of the month, the three witnesses saw an angel and the gold plates in the

woods near the Whitmer residence (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 22-25, 34; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:101; VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878; L. Cook 1981, 25).

After overseeing the initial stages of printing the Book of Mormon in Palmyra, Joseph Smith returned to Harmony, Pennsylvania, on 4 October 1829 (I.A.1, JOSEPH SMITH TO OLIVER COWDERY, 22 OCT 1829, 1). Despite the fact that he resided in Harmony, the center of church affairs continued in Fayette, excluding the church's organization in Manchester on 6 April 1830 (see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 82). On 11 April, Cowdery preached the first Mormon sermon in Fayette and baptized Christian, Anne, and Elizabeth Whitmer and Hiram, Katharine, and Mary Page in Seneca Lake (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 39, DRAFT:11; VI.E.3, DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., HISTORICAL SKETCH, 1900, 48). On 18 April, Cowdery baptized Mary and Peter Whitmer, Sr., and their daughter Elizabeth Ann, William and Elizabeth Jolly and their son Vincent, and Ziba Peterson, all in Seneca Lake (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 39; VI.E.3, DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., HISTORICAL SKETCH, 1900, 48). The first church conference was held on 9 June at Peter Whitmer, Sr.'s, residence, and two other conferences would be held at the Whitmer home on 26 September 1830 and 2 January 1831 (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 41; VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830 & 2 JAN 1831). Following the first conference, David Whitmer baptized at least eleven people in Seneca Lake (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 42; VI.A.16, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH J. W. CHATBURN, 1882).

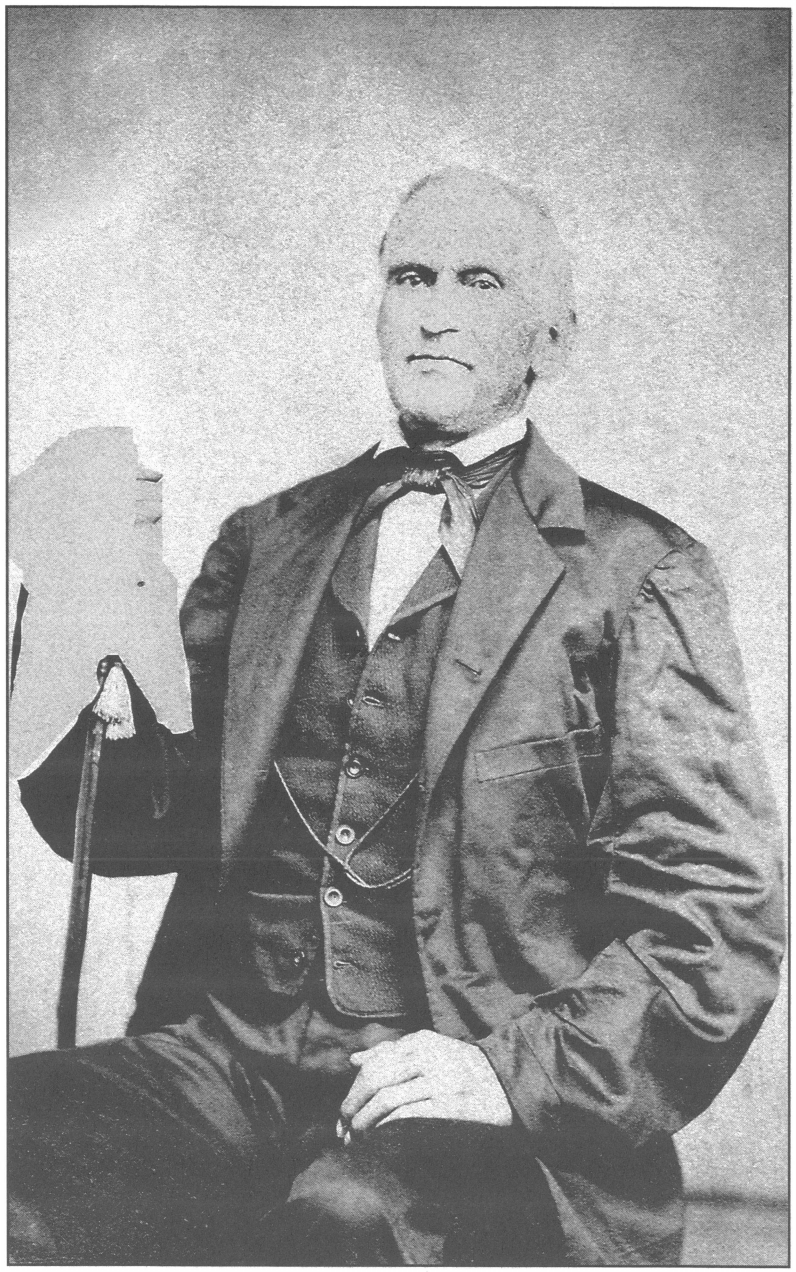
When Joseph Smith met with renewed opposition in Pennsylvania, Newel Knight transported him and his wife Emma to Fayette in September 1830, where they boarded with Peter Whitmer, Sr. In early October, Smith received a commandment that his brother Hyrum should move his family from Manchester to Colesville and that the remainder of the Smith family should locate to Waterloo, a small village near the Whitmer farm (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:158-59, 168-69). For a time, the Peter Whitmer, Sr., home was again the center of activities. This would change after the arrival of Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge from Ohio in early December 1830. During the conference in Fayette on 2 January 1831, Smith received a revelation instructing New York members to sell their land, consecrate the proceeds to church officials, and remove to Ohio (D&C 38:34-37). There were "some divisions among the congregation, some would not receive the above as the word of the Lord: but [said] that Joseph had invented it himself to deceive the people[,] that in the end he might

get gain" (VI.B.1, JOHN WHITMER HISTORY, 1831, 9). Smith's abandonment of Fayette and the loss of the Whitmer family's prominence may have contributed to David Whitmer's resentment of Rigdon, which he freely expressed in later years.

About 24 January 1831, Joseph and Emma Smith, together with Rigdon and Partridge, left for Kirtland, Ohio, where they arrived about 1 February (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 92; III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1829-1831, under 1 February 1831, 95). The first week of May, Joseph's mother, Lucy Smith, and about eighty Saints embarked from Waterloo and traveled up the Cayuga, Seneca, and Erie Canals to Buffalo. Together with the Colesville Saints, they made passage through the ice onto Lake Erie and arrived at Fairport, Ohio, on 14 May (see Porter 1971, 307-8, 316-17).

The present compilation includes numerous statements by and interviews with David Whitmer, followed by statements of his brother John Whitmer, brother-in-law Hiram Page, sister Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery, and nephew John C. Whitmer. Also included are accounts by area residents, including the early letters of farmer Lucius Fenn and the Reverend Diedrich Willers; the later statements of Lee Yost, Diedrich Willers, Sr., Diedrich Willers, Jr., and Harrison Chamberlain; and two published histories. Statements from non-residents or visitors to the Fayette area have also been provided. Finally, the miscellaneous documents section contains the Testimony of Three Witnesses, priesthood licences for Joseph Smith, Sr., John Whitmer, and Christian Whitmer, and excerpts from the Far West Record.

A.
David Whitmer
COLLECTION



David Whitmer, photographed by R. B. Rice, ca. 1864. Courtesy Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Missouri

INTRODUCTION TO DAVID WHITMER COLLECTION

David Whitmer, son of Peter Whitmer, Sr., was born on 7 January 1805 near Harrisburg, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania. David was four when his family moved to a farm in Fayette, New York. The family was associated with a German Reformed congregation[1] in Fayette known as Zion's Church. Calvinistic in doctrine and presbyterian in government, the German Reformed tradition was anti-authoritarian and anti-creedal, proclaiming scripture as the only source of doctrine. This may explain some of the attraction Joseph Smith had for the Whitmers, as well as a reason for David's subsequent troubles with the prophet over increasing hierarchical control, Smith's demand for primacy, and publication of Smith's revelations as articles of faith.

In 1828, Whitmer met Oliver Cowdery, who the next year traveled to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to meet the prophet. He reported back to Whitmer by letter that Smith apparently had the ability to discern Cowdery's private thoughts. This letter was followed by a request for refuge for Smith and Cowdery in Fayette. In early June 1829, Whitmer traveled to Harmony in his wagon and conveyed the two men to his father's residence where the translation of the Book of Mormon would continue.

Shortly after his return to Fayette, David Whitmer was baptized by Joseph Smith in Seneca Lake, along with other members of the Whitmer family. Near the end of June, David experienced what he would be remembered for when he, Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris gathered in the woods near Peter Whitmer's residence and there saw an angel displaying the gold plates on a table. Later known as "the most interviewed witness," Whitmer, like Harris (see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection"), interpreted this experience as visionary rather than literal or materialistic. During his June 1880 interview with Whitmer, John Murphy asked: "Then you had impressions as the quaker [receives] when the spirit moves, or as a good

---

1. David's ancestry on both sides of the family was German or German speaking, and the family spoke with a German accent. His grandfather, George Witmer, was born in Prussia, and George's father was born in Switzerland. David's mother's name, Mary Musselman, indicates German heritage, although she was apparently born in Pennsylvania. See VI.A.18, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE Q. CANNON, 27 FEB 1884.

Methodist in giving a happy experience, a feeling?" Whitmer answered, "Just so." (VI.A.9, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH JOHN MURPHY, JUN 1880). Following publication of Murphy's account, Whitmer responded with a written "Proclamation" in which he reaffirmed his testimony and attached an affidavit attesting to his honesty and standing in the community. Significantly, he stopped short of refuting any specific statement in Murphy's version of the interview (see VI.A.11, DAVID WHITMER PROCLAMATION, 19 MAR 1881).

The subjective aspect of Whitmer's experience was detailed in an 1885 interview conducted by James Henry Moyle: "Mr D. Whitmer Sen did not handle the plates. Only seen <saw> them. ... Says he did see them and the angel and heard him speak. But that it was indiscribable[,] that it was through the power of God (and was possibly or at least [visionary])[.] he then spoke of Paul hearing and seeing Christ but his associates did not. Because it is only seen in the Spirit." Moyle attempted to ascertain whether "the atmosphere about them was normal." In other words, did the angel appear in normal surroundings or was the natural world obscured? According to Whitmer, "it was indescribable, but the light was bright and clear, yet apparently," in Moyle's words, "a different kind of light, something of a soft haze. ..." A recent law school graduate at the time, Moyle noted his disappointment: "I was not fully satisfied with the ex=planation. It was more spiritual than I anticipated" (VI.A.25, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH JAMES HENRY MOYLE, 28 JUN 1885).

Whitmer told Nathan Tanner that those who beheld the plates were first "overshadowed by the power of God and a halo of brightness indescribable" (VI.A.28, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH NATHAN TANNER, 13 APR 1886, 1). In an interview in 1886, Whitmer further described "a strange entrancing influence, which permeated him so powerfully that he felt chained to the spot" (VI.A.29, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *OMAHA* [NE] *HERALD,* 10 OCT 1886). Explaining his experience to Anthony Metcalf in 1887, Whitmer said: "Of course we were in the spirit when we had the view, but were in the body also, and everything was as natural to us, as it is at any time. ... A bright light enveloped us where we were, that filled [the woods as brightly as] at noon day, and there in a *vision* or in the *spirit,* we saw and heard just as it is stated in my testimony in the Book of Mormon" (VI.A.32, DAVID WHITMER TO ANTHONY METCALF, 2 APR 1887).

An examination of Whitmer's activities prior to seeing the angel and the plates suggests that he was already sensitive to such experiences. For example, he reported that while he, Smith, and Cowdery first traveled from Harmony to Fayette in 1829, they saw a Nephite on the road who suddenly

disappeared. Upon arriving at his father's house, "they were impressed" that the same Nephite was under the "Shed." While plowing in his fields on the morning prior to his vision with the other two witnesses, Whitmer saw an apparition of a man who told him: "Blessed is the Lord & he that keepeth his Commandments" (see, e.g., VI.A.5, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 22-23 DEC 1877). One should therefore view his experience in the context of a highly charged period in his life. As Lyndon W. Cook has noted, these accounts of "other supernatural experiences ... must be seen in connection with the more frequently printed evidence to fully appreciate this eyewitness's testimony" (Cook 1991, x). Indeed, given Whitmer's overall state of mind and the subjectivity of his experience, the possibility of hallucination cannot be ruled out.

Before moving to Kirtland, Ohio, Whitmer married Julia Ann Jolly, daughter of a neighbor, William Jolly, on 9 January 1831. David had been ordained an elder in New York, but on 25 October 1831 in Ohio, he was further ordained to the high priesthood. In 1832, he moved to Jackson County, Missouri. Two years later, on 7 July 1834, he was ordained Joseph Smith's successor and president of the church in Missouri even though he had criticized Smith's leadership and institutional innovations. In the wake of the Kirtland banking crisis of 1837, Whitmer became increasingly outspoken and, in April 1838, was excommunicated. Soon after, he moved to Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, where he ran a livery stable and briefly served as mayor. For a short time, he was the leader of a splinter group which included former church apostle William E. McLellin and Book of Mormon witness Hiram Page. Thereafter, he remained separate from any denomination. He died in Richmond on 25 January 1888 (Cook 1981, 24-25; Cook 1991, ix-xxvi).

In this collection, Whitmer's numerous statements and interviews are presented in chronological order.[2] I have included all of the substantial state-

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2. Many of Whitmer's interviews were reprinted in the RLDS (now Community of Christ) *Saints' Herald* and from there in Lyndon W. Cook, ed., *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness* (Orem, UT: Grandin Book Co., 1991). The reprints vary slightly from the originals, with only insignificant deviations, but I have nevertheless consulted and presented the originals wherever possible. I have included only those portions of lengthy documents that are relevant to the pre-Ohio period, whereas Cook's compilation includes the documents in whole. Deletions are, of course, indicated by ellipses. The following items were not included in Cook's compilation: EBER D. HOWE ON DAVID WHITMER, 1834; DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH JOHN MURPHY, JUN 1880; E. S. GILBERT TO ELLEN E. DICKINSON, 1 AUG 1880; DAVID WHITMER PROCLAMATION, 19 MAR 1881;

ments he is known to have made regarding the Book of Mormon and early church history. Less significant statements are included in an addendum.

DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH UNKNOWN REPORTER, CIRCA JUL 1884; and DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS*, 1887; as well as several items in the addendum and portions of Whitmer's interviews with George Q. Cannon, James Henry Moyle, and Edward Stevenson.

1.
EBER D. HOWE ON DAVID WHITMER, 1834

E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed: or, A Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville, Ohio: E. D. Howe, 1834), 15-16.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On Eber D. Howe (1798-?), see introduction to III.F.6, EBER D. HOWE ON MARTIN HARRIS, 1834.

DAVID WHITMAR is the third special witness who signed [p. 15] the certificate with [Martin] Harris and [Oliver] Cowdery, testifying to having seen [the] plates. He is one of five of the same name and family who have been used as witnesses to establish the imposition, and who are now head men and leaders in the Mormonite camp. They were noted in their neighborhood for credulity and a general belief in witches,[1] and perhaps were fit subjects for the juggling arts of Smith. David relates that he was led by Smith into an open field, on his father's farm, where they found the Book of plates lying upon the ground.[2] Smith took it up and requested him to examine it, which he did for the space of half an hour or more, when he returned it to Smith, who placed it in its former position, alledging that it was in the custody of an Angel. He describes the plates as being about eight inches square, the leaves being metal of a whitish yellow color, and of the thickness of tin plates. The back was secured with three small rings of the same metal, passing through each leaf in succession; that the leaves were divided equidistant between the back and the edge, by cutting the plates in two parts, and again united with solder, so that the front might be opened, while the back part remained stationary and immovable, and was consequently a sealed book, which would not be revealed for ages to come, and which Smith himself was not permitted to understand. On opening that part of the book which was not secured by seals, he discovered inscribed on the aforesaid plates, divers

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1. See VI.D.2, DIEDRICH WILLERS TO REVEREND BRETHREN, 18 JUN 1830.

2. Cf. III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1828-1831, under 19 March 1831, 126.

and wonderful characters, some large and some small, but beyond the wisdom of man to understand without supernatural aid; this account is sometimes partly contradicted by Harris.[3]

3. Cf. III.F.6, EBER D. HOWE ON MARTIN HARRIS, 1834.

2.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ERI B. MULLIN, 1874

Eri B. Mullin to the Editor, 25 January 1880, *Saints' Herald* 27 (1 March 1880): 76.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Eri B. Mullin (1841-1922) was born in Ray, Davies County, Missouri. About 1863 he married Martha Harber. He joined the RLDS Church in 1870 and later died at Independence, Jackson County, Missouri (Black 1993, 4:550-51).

In the following brief letter to the editors of the *Saints' Herald,* Mullin recounts an interview he had with David Whitmer in 1874.

January 25, 1880.

Dear Brethren:—

I have been reading the news in the Herald for several years, and among the many testimonies that I have read is one from Mr. L. Traughber, of Carrol county, Missouri, said to be from D[avid]. Whitmer.[1] Mr. D. Whitmer told me in the year 1874, that Joseph Smith used the Urim and Thummim when he was translating. But now it is said that he lost it when he gave the first part of the book to Martin Harris[2]; after that he used the Stone. Bro. T. W. Smith, I think was right.[3] I for my part know he said that Joseph had the instrument Urim and Thummim. I asked him how they looked. He said they looked like spectacles, and he (Joseph) would put them on and look in a hat, or put his face in the hat and read. Says I, "Did he have the plates in there." "No; the words would appear, and if he failed to spell the word right, it would stay till it was spelled right, then pass away; another come, and so on." Now this Mr. Traughber used to say that the Reorganized Church was right, but now he fights against us; says we are not right, neither the Book of

---

1. See VI.A.8, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO *SAINTS' HERALD,* 13 OCT 1879.

2. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

3. See VI.A.4, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS W. SMITH, JAN 1876.

Covenants. I believe both to be right, but that Mr. Whitmer carried the idea that the translation was by both, or either Urim and Thummim and the stone.

Eri B. Mullin

3.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES*, AUGUST 1875

"The Golden Tablets on Which Were Inscribed the Records of the Tribe of Nephi. Written in 'Improved Egyptian' and Translated by Joseph Smith. How He Came to Find Them and the Mighty Goggles by Which They Were Translated. And How He Was Pitched Down Hill for Daring to Think He had Struck a Bonanza. An Interview with David Whitmer, Who Helped to Make the Translation. And Who Now Holds the Original Manuscripts of the Book of Mormon. ...," *Chicago Times,* 7 August 1875, 1.

EDITORIAL NOTE

This interview was conducted at David Whitmer's home in Richmond, Missouri, in the presence of Jacob T. Child, editor of the Richmond *Conservator.* After the interview was published, an unidentified non-Mormon gentleman from Salt Lake City, "having entertained doubt of the genuineness of the reprinted interview of the Chicago *Times* correspondent with Mr. David Whitmer, relative to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and other matters, as published in the [Salt Lake] *Herald* some weeks ago, wrote to Mr. Whitmer, making inquiry as to the reliability of the statements attributed to him," and received the following:

> Richmond, Missouri, August 17, 1875.
>
> In the fear of the Lord, and under the guardianship of my aged grandfather, I write to you for him: "The conversation in which I gave the outlines of my experiences and history to the reporter of the Chicago *Times,* and published by them—which was copied by the *Herald,* is substantially correct. There may be a few minor errors, but they do not interfere at all with what I gave him in substance, or the purposes of the Almighty Father in disseminating his truth."
>
> Under his instruction (David Whitmer)
> I am sir, your obedient servant
> George W. Schweich
>
> (*Salt Lake Herald,* 18 September 1875; Cook 1991, 236).

While everybody knows that Joseph Smith was the founder of the Church of Christ, or, as it is more commonly called, Mormonism, comparatively few know anything more than this of Smith and his creed. To bring out some of the salient points in the life of this wonderful man, to give the true record of the finding of the golden tablets, and the translation of their "reformed Egyptian" hieroglyphics into the book of Mormon, by means of the Urim and Thummim, and to show wherein the Church of Christ of Latter-Day saints differs from the original Church of Christ, as instituted by Joseph Smith, the prophet, are, in brief, the objects of this article.

JOSEPH SMITH WAS BORN

Dec. 13 [23], 1805, at Sharon, Windsor county, Ver[mon]t., very much as ordinary mortals are brought into the world. There were no "fiery shapes" or "burning crescents" to mark the advent of this, the greatest prophet since the days of Mohammed. His parents belonged to the sub-stratum of society, or what was known as the mud-sill element in *ante bellum* days. In 1815 they moved to a point near Palmyra, Wayne county, New York, and 10 years later crossed the line and settled in the adjoining county of Ontario.[1] Joseph was an illiterate and wayward, but at the same [time] an original youth. Early in life he manifested a strong tendency toward the mysterious, and managed to earn shillings as a water-witch, using the forked hazel stick to designate the exact place where the credulous could sink wells with a certainty of finding an ample supply of water. So, at least, say those who disbelieve in his religion. It was about the year 1827 that Joseph inaugurated, or was the instrument of inaugurating, one of the most novel and successful religious schemes that has started the world for many centuries,—one that has attracted the attention of, and made converts from, the old world as well as the new, and has been and is to-day a formidable element in the religious and political affairs of the republic.

THE BASIS OF THE WHOLE FABRIC

was the finding, or the purported finding, by Smith, of certain sacred records which 14 centuries before had been buried by the last remnant of one of the lost tribes of Israel.[2] Hon. Joseph Smith was led to the discovery, and how he utilized it, was told to a TIMES reporter by David Whitmer, of Missouri,

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1. Actually, Joseph Smith, Sr., moved to Palmyra in 1816, and purchased his Manchester land in 1820 (see III.L.4, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND RECORDS, 1820-1830).

2. It was common, and sometimes still is, for those unfamiliar with the contents of the Book of Mormon to incorrectly describe it as a record of the lost tribes of Israel. The error was certainly the editor's, not Whitmer's.

who witnessed much of that whereof he speaks, and who to-day has in his possession the original documents on which the church was founded.[3] His story runs somewhat thus:

One night Joseph Smith awoke from deep sleep to find his humble room ablaze with glorious effulgence. In the midst of this supernatural radiance stood an angelic figure robed in white, who, in seraphic tones, said to him that in a stone casket buried near the summit of the hill Cumorah were the priceless and sacred records of the Nephites, one of the lost tribes. Presently the light and the strange messenger disappeared, and all was dark. Joseph slept, and a second time he awoke to see the same mysterious light and presence, and to hear the same weird directions. He slept again, and a third time the angelic visitant and heavenly light appeared as before. In the morning Joseph arose pale and haggard, meditating upon the events of the night, and his parents, observing his strange appearance, questioned him closely but received only evasive answers. As soon as he could escape observation he strolled out and away from the house and sought the hill Cumorah, an oval prominence with a base half a mile in diameter, situated near Manchester. He found the exact spot designated by the white-robed visitor, and at once commenced digging in the rock-ribbed soil. At the depth of two and a half or three feet his faith was rewarded by the discovery of

A SQUARE STONE CASKET.

Overpowered by the discovery he rested for a few moments, and then visions of worldly emolument flitted through his overwrought brain. He had been singled out as the discoverer of this secret of the infinite! Should he neglect this golden opportunity to amass a fortune? No! He would take a trusty few into his confidence, the better to accomplish his mercenary purpose, and untold wealth and fame would be guaranteed to all. While these worldly thoughts occupied Joseph's mind, the angel of the Lord again suddenly stood before him, told him that he had approached this sacred spot in [an] irreverent mood, that the secrets of the casket could never be his until he sought them in the proper spirit, and then hurried him unceremoneously to the plain below. Joseph arose chagrined, and resolutely ascended the hill, when he was again hur[r]ied back with words of awful warning. A third attempt,

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3. On several occasions Whitmer incorrectly claimed to have the original Book of Mormon manuscript, apparently unaware that the original dictated manuscript was placed in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House on 2 October 1841. Whitmer was in possession of the printer's copy. In correcting Whitmer's error, Edward Stevenson noted: "Be this as it may, it would be hard to convince David Whitmer of it" (*Millennial Star* 48 [5 July 1886]: 421).

with like result, sufficed to convince him that he was battling against the Lord, and he desisted and repaired to his father's house, leaving the casket intact. After long weeks of prayerful purification he again visited the hill Cumorah and reverently unearthed the casket. With an unpoetical crowbar he removed the cover, when were revealed to his astonished sight a number of golden plates, and a singular stone. The plates were each about 6x10 inches in size, and were held together by a brazen ring passing through a hole near the top, so that the entire package could be opened like a book. On these plates were mystic characters that no man could decipher. A learned philologist in New York city was consulted but confessed his utter ignorance of the language embodied in the symbols.[4] But a stone had been found with the plates, shaped like a pair of ordinary spectacles, though much larger, and at least half an inch in thickness, and perfectly opaque save to the prophetic vision of Joseph Smith. On the tablets or plates were engraven the records of the lost tribe of Nephites, and the stone was

THE URIM AND THUMMIM,

by which the seers of old had deciphered the mysteries of the universe.

Joseph Smith, recognizing the necessity of having confidants and assistants that he might utilize the great gift, shared his secret with a few young men in the neighborhood, among whom were Oliver Cowdery[5] and Martin Harris.[6] David Whitmer, living 22 miles away, came to town on business, overheard some conversation with reference to the discovery, became interested, formed Joseph's acquaintance, was shown the plates, as well as some practical tests of the Urim and Thummim, and was overwhelmed with conviction, and became an active disciple and confidant. In 1828 Smith commenced the translation of the inscriptions upon the plates, but the excitement in the vicinity of his father's residence was such that he was compelled to leave the country.[7] He took refuge at Harmony, Pennsylvania, whither

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4. Concerning Charles Anthon's inability to read the characters, see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection"; also V.D.2, CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834; and V.D.3, CHARLES ANTHON TO THOMAS WINTHROP COIT, 3 APR 1841.

5. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

6. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

7. According to Joseph Smith, he left Manchester, New York, in December 1827 and made transcriptions from the plates after his arrival at Harmony, Pennsylvania (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 5).

Cowdery soon followed him,[8] stopping over night en route at the house of David Whitmer's father, when the two young men conversed long and earnestly upon the new revelations. In the spring of 1829, even Harmony became too hot for Joseph, and he sent to New York for succor. David Whitmer started out in a wagon, drove 160 miles to Harmony, took Smith and Cowdery as passengers, and conveyed them thence to his father's house where they remained in retirement until September, completing the translation.[9] During all these months David had free access to their room, and was

AN EYE-WITNESS TO THE METHOD OF PROCEDURE.

The plates were not before Joseph while he translated, but seem to have been removed by the custodian angel. The method pursued was commonplace but nevertheless effective. Having placed the Urim and Thummim in his hat, Joseph placed the hat over his face, and with prophetic eyes read the invisible symbols syllable by syllable and word by word, while Cowdery or Harris acted as recorders.[10] "So illiterate was Joseph at that time," said Mr. Whitmer, "that he didn't even know that Jerusalem was a walled city,[11] and he was utterly unable to pronounce many of the names which the magic power of the Urim and Thummim revealed, and therefore spelled them out in syllables, and the more erudite scribe put them together. The stone was the same used by the Jaredites at Babel.[12] I have frequently placed it to my eyes but could see nothing through it. I have seen Joseph, however, place it to his eyes and instantly read signs 160 miles distant and tell exactly what was transpiring there. When I went to Harmony after him he told me the names of every hotel at which I had stopped on the road, read the signs, and described

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8. Whitmer's account skips over Martin Harris's tenure as scribe, which was from about 12 April to 14 June 1828.

9. Smith and Cowdery moved to Fayette, New York, in early June 1829 and completed the translation by about the end of June. After arranging for the printing in Palmyra, Smith returned to Harmony on 4 October 1829, remaining there until his return to Fayette in September 1830.

10. The reviewer apparently confuses Smith's seer stone with his "spectacles," sometimes referred to as urim and thummim. Smith placed his seer stone, not the urim and thummim, into his hat (see VI.A.8, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO *SAINTS' HERALD,* 13 OCT 1879; see also Lancaster 1990, 97-112).

11. This information originates with Emma Smith (see I.F.1, EMMA SMITH BIDAMON INTERVIEW WITH EDMUND C. BRIGGS, 1856; also VI.A.20, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH E. C. BRIGGS AND R. ETZENHOUSER, 25 APR 1884).

12. See Eth. 3:21-28. However, this passage refers to the urim and thummim, not the seer stone.

various scenes without having ever received any information from me."[13] The unbelievers frequently attempted to confound the faithful few by asking them if they supposed

"THAT FOOL BOY"

could write anything, or that God would select such a wretch as a medium of communicating His will. The ready answer was that God was not very particular as to the instruments used to accomplish certain desired ends, and that devils as well as angels had their places in His economy.

In 1830 the Book of Mormon was first published, and on the 6th of April of that year the Church of Christ was organized at Manchester.[14] ...[15]

DAVID WHITMER

was born near Harrisburg, Pa., and when he was but four years old his parents removed to New York, settling at a point midway between the northern extremities of Lake Cayuga and Seneca, two miles from Waterloo, two miles from Seneca river, four miles from Seneca Falls, seven miles from Geneva, and 22 miles from Palmyra. He is now 70 years of age, but as hale and hearty as most men at 50. In person he is above medium height, stoutly built though not corpulent, his shoulders inclining to stoop as if from so long supporting his massive head rather than from the weight of years, his frank, manly, and benevolent face closely shaven, and his whole exterior betokening him to be one of nature's gentlemen. The rudiments of education he learned in school, and a life-time of thought and research have served to expand and store his mind with vast funds of information. THE TIMES reporter found him at his pleasant two-story white frame residence near the centre of the town of Richmond, Mo., and, in company with Hon. J. T Child,[16] editor of The Conservator, was admitted, introduced, and received a cordial greeting.

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13. Cf. VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878; and VI.A.17, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH JAMES H. HART, 21 AUG 1883 & 10 MAR 1884.

14. The designation of Manchester as the location of the church's organization is likely the editor's insertion. Elsewhere Whitmer consistently, although incorrectly, places the organization at Fayette, New York (see, e.g., VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 33). On the location of the church's organization, see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 82.

15. Discussion of the Book of Mormon's contents and reproduction of the Testimony of Three Witnesses are here deleted.

16. Jacob T. Childs, age thirty-seven and a native of Virginia, is listed in the 1870 census of Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, as a "Publisher" (1870:587).

When the object of the call was made known, Mr. Whitmer smilingly and meditatively remarked that it was true he had in his possession the original records, and was conversant with the history of the Church of Christ from the beginning, but was under obligations to hold both history and records sacred until such time as the interests of truth and true religion might demand their aid to combat error. Presently he became quite animated, arose to his feet and with great earnestness and good nature spoke for half an hour on the harmony between the bible and the original Book of Mormon, showing how the finding of the plates had been predicted, referring to the innumerable evidences, in the shape of ruins of great cities existing on this continent, of its former occupation by a highly civilized race, reverently declared his solemn conviction of the authenticity of the records in his possession, and closed by

DENOUNCING THE LATTER DAY SAINTS OF UTAH

as an abomination in the sight of the Lord. ...[17]

David Whitmer believes in the bible as implicitly as any devotee alive, and he believes in the Book of Mormon as much as he does in the bible. The one is but a supplement to the other, according to his idea, and neither would he complete were the other lacking. And no man can look at David Whitmer's face for a half-hour, while he charit[abl]y and modestly speaks of what he has seen, and then boldly and earnestly confesses the faith that is in him, and say that he is a bigot or an enthusiast. While he shrinks from unnecessary public promulgation of creed, and keenly feels that the Brighamites and Danites and numerous other ites have disgraced it, yet he would not hesitate, in emergency, to

STAKE HIS HONOR AND EVEN HIS LIFE

upon its reliability. His is the stern faith of the puritans, modified by half a century of benevolent thought and quiet observation. He might have been a martyr had he lacked sense and shrewdness to escape the death sentence that was pronounced against him by the high priests of the church he had helped to build. As it is, he is perhaps the only living witness of the wondrous revelation made to Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism.

David Whitmer was married in Seneca county, New York, in 1830 [1831], and was for a number of years an elder in the Church of Christ. To-day he is the proprietor of a livery stable in Richmond, Mo., owns some real estate, has a handsome balance in the bank, is universally respected by all

17. Whitmer's statements about Utah, Brigham Young, and polygamy are here deleted (see Cook 1991, 5-6).

who know him, and surrounded by children and grandchildren, is pleasantly gliding toward the gates of sunset, confident that the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob was also the God of Nephi, whose faithful disciple he has been and is. He does not believe that all believing in the Book of Mormon or all adherents to any other faith will be found among the elect, but that the truly good of every faith will be gathered in fulfilment of prophecy. Neither does he believe that the Book of Mormon is the only record of the lost tribes hidden in the earth, but, on the contrary, that the caves hold other records that will not come forth till all is peace and the lion shall eat straw with the lamb. Three times has he been at the hill Cumorah and seen the casket that contained the tablets, and the seer-stone. Eventually the casket had been washed down to the foot of the hill, but it was to be seen when he last visited the historic place.[18] He declares that he has never been a Mormon, as the term is commonly interpreted, but is a firm believer in the book, in the faith of Christ, and the fulfilment of the prophecies in due time. ...[19]

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18. In subsequent interviews, Whitmer states that in 1828 he was told by others about the place of deposit on the Hill Cumorah (see VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881; and VI.A.14, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* 14 OCT 1881). This is contradicted by Lorenzo Saunders, who said he searched the hill only days after Smith removed the plates and could find no evidence that anyone had dug there except on its northeastern slope where the treasure seekers had been a year or two earlier (see III.J.20, LORENZO SAUNDERS TO THOMAS GREGG, 28 JAN 1885). It is likely that Whitmer believed the eastern excavation to be the place of extraction and that the stones at the bottom of the hill had originally belonged to the stone box (cf. III.K.32, EDWARD STEVENSON REMINISCENCE, 1893, 13).

19. Whitmer's account of leaving the church in 1838 and discussion of the Spaulding theory of the Book of Mormon's origin have been deleted (see Cook 1991, 7-9).

4.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS W. SMITH, JANUARY 1876

1. Thomas Wood Smith to the Editor, *Fall River* (MA) *Herald,* 28 March 1879; reprinted in the *Saints' Herald* 26 (15 April 1879): 128.
2. Thomas W. Smith to Joseph Smith III, *Saints' Herald* 27 (1 January 1880): 13.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Thomas Wood Smith (1838-94) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1858 he married Helen Marr Pierce. While laboring as a Christian minister in Illinois, he was converted and baptized into the RLDS church on 14 March 1866 and was called to be an apostle in the Quorum of Twelve in 1873. He died at Independence, Missouri (Smith and Smith 1897-1903, 4:678-83).

His initial statement in the *Fall River Herald* was disputed by John L. Traughber (see VI.A.8, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO *SAINTS' HERALD,* 13 OCT 1879), to which Smith responded in the *Saints' Herald,* item number 2 below.

[*1. Thomas W. Smith Statement, 1879*]

Editor of Fall River Herald:—

... The assertion that "the three witnesses confessed to having sworn falsely" is a base fabrication, it is unqualifiedly false. Beside possessing evidence that cannot be gainsaid that Oliver Cowdery[1] and Martin Harris[2] maintained the truth of their published testimony concerning the seeing of the angel and viewing the plates, till the day of their death; (and I will gladly avail myself of the privilege of proving this,) and beside having the printed testimony of David Whitmer[,] the other witness[,] as it appeared in the Chi-

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1. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

2. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

cago *Times*, Aug. 7, 1875,[3] I personally heard him [David Whitmer] state in Jan. 1876 in his own house in Richmond, Ray Co. Mo. in most positive language, that he did truly see in broad day light, a bright, and most beautiful being, an "Angel from Heaven," who did hold in his hands the golden plates, which he turned over leaf by leaf, explaining the contents, here and there. He also described the size and general appearance of the plates, and he further said, that he saw Joseph translate, by the aid of the Urim and Thummim, time and again, and he then produced a large pile of foolscap paper closely written in a very fair hand, which he declared was the manuscript written mainly by Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris, as the translation was being read by the aid of the Urim and Thummim of the characters on the plates by Joseph Smith, which work of translation and transcription he frequently saw. ...

T. W. SMITH.

[*2. Thomas W. Smith Response, 1880*]

Bro. Joseph:—When I first read Mr. Traughber's paper in [the] *Herald* of November 15th,[4] I thought that I would not notice his attack at all, as I supposed that I was believed by the Church to be fair and truthful in my statements of other men's views, when I have occasion to use them, and I shall make this reply only: That unless my interview with David Whitmer in January, 1876, was only a dream, or that I failed to understand plain English, I believed then, and since, and now, that he said that Joseph possessed, and used the Urim and Thummim in the translation of the inscriptions referred to, and I remember of being much pleased with that statement, as I had heard of the "Seer stone" being used. And unless I dreamed the interview, or very soon after failed to recollect the occasion, he described the form and size of the said Urim and Thummim. The nearest approach to a retraction of my testimony as given in the Fall River *Herald* and that given publicly in many places from the stand from January, 1876, till now, is, that unless I altogether misunderstood "Father Whitmer" on this point, he said the translation was done by the aid of the Urim and Thummim. If he says he did not intend to convey such an impression to my mind, then I say I regret that I misunderstood him, and unintentionally have misrepresented him. But that I understood him as represented by me frequently I still affirm. If Father Whitmer

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3. See VI.A.3, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* AUG 1875.

4. See VI.A.8, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO *SAINTS' HERALD,* 13 OCT 1879.

will say over his own signature, that he never said, or at least never intended to say, that Joseph possessed or used in translating the Book of Mormon, the Urim and Thummim, I will agree to not repeat my testimony as seen in the Fall River *Herald* on that point.[5]

T. W. SMITH

5. Whitmer told Edward Stevenson that Smith first translated with the urim and thummim but afterward used the seer stone (VI.A.5, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 22-23 DEC 1877). In his 1887 pamphlet, Whitmer stated that Smith put the "seer stone" into his hat and translated (VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 12).

5.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 22-23 DECEMBER 1877

1. Edward Stevenson, Journal, 14:10-18, entry of 22-23 December 1877, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
2. Edward Stevenson to Orson Pratt, 23 December 1877, "Journal History," LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
3. Edward Stevenson to John Taylor, 7 January 1878, "Journal History," LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
4. Edward Stevenson to the Editor, 21 January 1878, *Salt Lake Herald,* 2 February 1878, 3.
5. Edward Stevenson, *Reminiscences of Joseph, the Prophet and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Edward Stevenson, 1893), 15.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Edward Stevenson (1820-97)[1] heard David Whitmer bear his testimony of the Book of Mormon in 1834 when Joseph Smith and others visited Pontiac, Michigan (see I.A.9, JOSEPH SMITH RECITAL TO PONTIAC [MI] SAINTS, OCT 1834). He visited Whitmer in Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, on at least three occasions many years later: 22-23 December 1877, 9 February 1886, and 2 January 1887 (see also VI.A.27, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 9 FEB 1886; and VI.A.31, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 2 JAN 1887). The following transcriptions are from Stevenson's journal—an entry made about the time of his first interview with Whitmer—and sources wherein Stevenson reflects on this interview.

[*1. Journal, 22-23 December 1877*]

Sat[urday] 22, [December 1877].[2] after Breakfast wee took a walk up to

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1. On Edward Stevenson, see introduction to III.J.13, EDWARD STEVENSON INTERVIEWS WITH MARTIN HARRIS, 1870.

2. Although dated 22 December, Stevenson evidently recorded his in-

David Whitmers the onley one of the 3 Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, that is now Living & Spent 4 [h]ours with him & again 4 [h]ours more in the Evening it being about 9 P.M. & on Sunday Evening about 2 [h]ours again So that in all wee Spent 10 [h]ours he[a]reing & being he[a]rd [p. 10] and as I was Successful in Emigrateing Martin Harris[3] to Utah, I hope & Pray that I may be instrumental in the hands of the Lord in doing good & Bring Bro David to Zion. I will relate Some of the Items of Conversation as they Passed between us.

Bro David Please relate your feelings in regard to the Testamoney of yours in the Book of Mormon, & the orrigen of the Gosple through Joseph Smith. "Well as I know that the Sun Shines So do I know that I was Plowing one fore=noon & I he[a]rd a voice & Saw a personage Who Said [']Blessed is the Lord & he that keepeth his Commandments['] & the very next Round Bro. Joseph & Oliver Came along & Said [']Come David & be one of [p. 11] the witnesses of the Book of Mormon['] Wee walked through A clearing & all Sat on a log[.] it was about 11 A.M. When A Light appeared & it Grew Brighter until an Angle Stood before us and on the appearance of A table Was laid the Plates[,] Urim & Thumin[,] Ball or Director[,] Sword of Laban &c & A voice Declared & Bore record of the truth of the Translation turning the Leaves over & thus the vision ended.["]

David Whitmer is 73 in Jan. 1878, & Stands 5 [feet], 10 in[ches]. [tall] & Weighs 150 lbs. fair & Prominent Features. he has only one Son David & one Daughter Now A Widdow. Wee [When he] had Shown us the Transcript Coppy of the original of the Book of Mormon Written by [p. 12] Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery,[4] Ema Smith,[5] the Prophets Wife, & Ch[r]istian Whitmer.[6] it was fools Cap & about 2 inches thick & clean & well Preserved. he Gave us the Names of the 6 at the organisation of the Church[:][7]

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terviews after the conclusion of his last meeting with Whitmer on the evening of the subsequent day, 23 December.

3. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

4. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

5. On Emma Hale Smith (1804-79), see "Introduction to Emma Smith Collection."

6. On Christian Whitmer (1798-1835), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 96. The printer's copy that David Whitmer possessed bears the handwriting of three individuals: Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, and an unknown scribe (see Skousen 2001, 9-10).

7. Regarding Whitmer's list of initiating elders, see introduction to IV.A.4, JOSEPH KNIGHT, JR., STATEMENT, 11 AUG 1862.

1 Joseph Smith <Jr>
2 Oliver Cowdry
3 David Whitmer
4 Hyrum Smith[8]
5 John Whitmer[9]
6 Christian Whitmer

[A]s near as he could remember it was about Diner [noon] time at Peter Whitmers house,[10] thare was presant about 40 or 50 Persons Mostly Members of the Church at Ft [Fayette] N[ew]. York[.][11] his testamoney is as Strong as Possible that Joseph Smith did receive Revelations & did organise the Church With apostles [p. 13] & Gifts on the Rock [cf. Matt. 16:15-19]. ... his testamoney was now going [to] the World over in the Book of Mormon [p. 14] <David Said that the Prophet translated first by the uirm & thumim & afterwards by A Seer Stone—E[dward] Stevenson.> ... [p. 15]

Sunday [December] 23d [1877] ... Paid our Last visit to David W[hitmer]. ... [p. 16] <saw one of the Nephites> I wish to mention an Item of conversation with David Whitmer in regard to Seeing one of the Nephites. Zina Young,[12] Desired me to ask about it. David Said. ["]Oliver [Cowdery], & the Prophet, & I were riding in a wagon, & an aged man about 5 feet 10 [inches tall], heavey Set & on his back an old fashioned Armey knapsack Strap[p]ed over his Shoulders & Something Square in it, & he walked alongside of the Wagon & Wiped the Sweat off his face, Smileing very Pleasant["] David asked him to ride and he replied ["]I am going across to the hill Comorah.["] Soon after they passed they felt Strangely & Stop[p]ed, but could See nothing of him all arround was clear & they asked the Lord about it[.] he Said that the Prophet Looked as White as a Sheet & Said that it was one [p. 17] of the

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8. On Hyrum Smith (1800-44), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 12.

9. On John Whitmer (1802-78), see "Introduction to John Whitmer Collection."

10. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

11. The number of members present indicates that Whitmer is likely mistaken about the location of the church's organization, confusing the first church conference of 9 June 1830 (see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 82; and IV.A.4, JOSEPH KNIGHT, JR., STATEMENT, 11 AUG 1862).

12. Zina D. (Huntington) Young (1821-1901) was born at Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, where she and her parents joined the church in 1835. In 1841 she became a plural wife to Joseph Smith. After Smith's death, she married Brigham Young.

Nephites & that he had the Plates.[13] on arriveing at home they were impressed that the Same Person was under the Shed & again they were informed that it was So. they Saw whare <he> had been & the next Morning Davids Mother [Mary Musselman Whitmer][14] Saw the Person at the Shed and he took the Plates from A Box & Showed them to her[.] She Said that they Were fastened with Rings thus: ⋹ he turned the leaves over this was a Satisf[ac]t[io]n to her.[15] ... [p. 18]

[*2. Letter to Orson Pratt, 23 December 1877*][16]

Hudgins House, Richmond, Ray Co., Mo.
Dec 23<d>, 1877<.>

Orson Pratt,[17]
Salt Lake City,

Dear Bro: I have just returned from the third interview with David Whitmer, since our arrival at this place, night before last. David Looks pretty well preserved, and weighs heavier than ever before 152 lbs; and stands 5 feet 10, fair, and prominent features. Bro. Hyrum Clark[18] and myself met him at his own fireside and were made welcome, and he was very free to converse, each interview lasting several hours. I asked him in regard to the names of the six members at the organization of the Church on the 6th day of April 1830,

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13. The context of the story is Whitmer's conveyance of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Fayette, New York, in early June 1829. Whitmer repeated this to Stevenson on 9 February 1886 (see VI.A.27, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 9 FEB 1886).

14. On Mary Musselman Whitmer (1778-1856), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 101.

15. For another account of Mary Whitmer's experience, see VI.C.4, JOHN C. WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW JENSON AND EDWARD STEVENSON, 11 OCT 1888.

16. My transcription is from a typescript of the original, which is presumably in the now closed Orson Pratt Papers, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah. The typescript has some corrections in hand, indicated here by angle brackets.

17. On Orson Pratt (1811-81), see introduction to I.A.16, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1839.

18. Perhaps the Hiram Clark, age four, listed with his mother, Thankful Clark, in the 1850 census of Salt Lake City, Utah (1850:30).

and he gave them as follows: 1st Joseph Smith, 2<,> Oliver Cowdery, 3rd<,> David Whitmer, 4th<,> Hyrum Smith, 5<,> John Whitmer, 6<,> Christian Whitmer and as near as he could remember<,> about 12 ~~m~~. [noon] dinner time. He also said that there were 40 or 50 persons present many of whom were in the Church.

He showed us the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon written by 4 <four> different persons<,> Martin Harris<,> Oliver Cowdery<,> Emma Smith, and Christian Whitmer. It was clean and well cared for, written on foo<l>scap, and about 2 inches thick. It came into his hands from Oliver Cowdery at his death, who lived in this place at the time of his death, and now he is [interred] by the side of both the father and the mother of David Whitmer<,> and some others of the Whitmer family, about half a mile north of Richmond. We visited the spot to-day. ... We asked David Whitmer in regard to his faith in the Book of Mormon. He smiled and his countenance lit up, saying, "As I know the sun shines so I know an angel appeared while Joseph, Oliver and myself sat upon a log in a clearing about 11 o'clock in the morning.", a light first appearing which grew brighter until the angel stood before them and placed upon a table before them the plates of gold, also the brass plates, [p. 3] the Urim and Thum<m>im (or interpreters) the ball or compass and the sword of Laban. He said there could be nothing to induce him to deny these things. He further stated that he knew that Joseph was a prophet, and did receive revelations and that he organized the Church on the rock with the 12 Apostles. ...

With kind regards,
E. STEVENSON<.>

P.S. Martin Harris was not with Oliver and David, but subsequently witnessed the plates, etc. probably the next day.[19]

E.S.

[*3. Letter to John Taylor, 7 January 1878*][20]

Shady Grove, Hickman County,
Tenn.
Jan 7th 1878

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19. The claim that Harris may have seen the plates the day after the experience of Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer is contradicted by Lucy Smith, who remembered the four men returning to Peter Whitmer's house afterwards and Harris in particular testifying about the vision.

20. My transcription has been taken from a typed version of the original

President John Taylor,[21]
Salt Lake City,

Dear Brother:—I am happy to say that Brother Clark and myself arrived in this place Dec. 28th, 1877 in safety and in good health. We stopped over at R. and L. Junction<,> Mo. 5 miles from Richmond, Mo. where after putting up at the Hadgin's Hotel, we found David Whitmer, the only surviving one of the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon. With the exception of rh[e]umatism he seems to enjoy good health, possessing fair and prominent features. After being kindly received we held four hours conversation, and met again, and spent four hours more in the evening; the next day Sabbath, two hours more. We found him quite communicative and cheerful, and seemed pleased to receive us. After some conversation he showed us the original manuscript copy of the Book of Mormon, written by Martin Harris, David Whitmer, Emma Smith and Christian Whitmer, it was about two inches thick, of foolscap and clean and well preserved. It fell into his hands through the death of Oliver Cowdery, who died and was buried north of Richmond where lie the remains of Peter Whitmer and his wife—both are father and mother of David Whitmer. We asked him regarding the names of the six at the organization of the Church, April 6th, 1830 [and] he stated as follows:

1st. Joseph Smith, Jr.[,] 2nd, Oliver Cowdery, 3rd, David Whitmer[,] 4th Hyrum Smith<,> 5th John Whitmer<,> 6th Christian Whitmer. There were about forty or fifty present, many of whom had been baptized<,> this [conversation] took place about noon.

I also desired him to state his present faith in regard to the Book of Mormon and [the] organization of the Church. He stated in the most positive terms that he saw the angel, golden plates, and the urim and thumim, etc. The plates were opened leaf by leaf, he saw the characters and heard a voice from heaven bearing record, that he also knew that the Prophet Joseph did translate the Book of Mormon by the power of God, that he did receive revelation<,> and that the Church was built on the Rock, and that it was revealed [p. 2] that there were to be Twelve Apostles, long before they were chosen <a>nd ordained. ... He related many very interesting items of seeing one of the Nephites in company with the Prophet and Oliver, when Joseph's countenance became almost transparent, etc. ...

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presumably in the now closed John Taylor Papers, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah. The typed version also has some corrections in hand.

21. On John Taylor (1808-87), see introduction to I.A.27, JOHN TAYLOR ACCOUNT, 1850.

EDWARD STEVENSON.

[*4. Letter to* Salt Lake Herald, *21 January 1878*]

SANDY GROVE,
Hickman Co., Tenn.,
January 21, 1878.

Editors Herald:

This, my fourteenth trip across the plains—five times by team and nine by train, was a successful one in every particular; no accident of any description on the whole route. The weather was delightful, and the scarcity of snow at this season of the year was very remarkable.

One of the occasions of my present trip was a desire to visit and converse with David Whitmer, the only one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon now living. On the 22d ult. I visited him at Richmond, Mo., and since that time have had three interviews with him, occupying in all about ten hours. Mr. Whitmer is 73 years of age; 5 feet 10 in height; well proportioned, and possesses good physical abilities. I found him in a pleasant mood and very communicative on various topics. In reply to a question by me, as to his present views as a witness to the plates of the Book of Mormon, he said: "I was plowing in my field, when I heard a voice saying, 'Blessed is the name of the Lord and those that keep his commandments.' After I had plowed one more round, the prophet and Oliver Cowdery came along, and said: 'Come and be one of the witnesses.' We passed through a clearing and sat on a log. While there, a light appeared, which grew brighter, until an angel stood before them with the plates and other things. The angel turned the leaves so that we could see the engravings, etc. We then heard a voice, saying that those things were true and that the translation was correct. This was about 11 o'clock a.m."

Mr. Whitmer also showed me the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon, written by Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, Emma Smith and Christian Whitmer. This fell into the present owner's hands at the death of Oliver Cowdery, and is now held as a choice relic. Mr. Cowdery died at the residence of Mr. Whitmer, in Richmond, Ray county, Missouri. ...

EDWARD STEVENSON.

[*5. Reminiscence, 1893*]

... It was likewise stated to me by David Whitmer in the year 1877 that Oliver Cowdery told him that the Prophet Joseph and himself had seen this

room [in the Hill Cumorah] and that it was filled with treasure, and on a table therein were the breastplate and the sword of Laban, as well as the portion of gold plates not yet translated, and that these plates were bound by three small gold rings, and would also be translated, as was the first portion in the days of Joseph. When they are translated much useful information will be brought to light. But till that day arrives, no Rochester adventurers shall ever see them or the [p. 14] treasures, although science and mineral rods testify that they are there.[22] ...

22. On Oliver Cowdery's visit to the cave, see III.K.30, BRIGHAM YOUNG ACCOUNT, 1877.

6.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH P. WILHELM POULSON, CIRCA APRIL 1878

P. Wilhelm Poulson to Editor, 13 August 1878, *Deseret Evening News,* 16 August 1878.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Little is known about P. Wilhelm Poulson. He is listed in the *Gazetteer of Utah and Salt Lake City Directory* for 1874 as "Poulson, P. W. homaeopathic physician, res[idence]. Godbe's building" (Slone 1874). Poulson's first letter to the *Deseret News* editors, dated 31 July 1878, was written from Ovid, Idaho (see VI.B.7, JOHN WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH P. WILHELM POULSON, APR 1878), and the present letter was written from Ogden, Utah. The editor introduces the letter as follows: "We publish the following, the chief portions of a letter received from Dr. Poulson containing particulars of an interview with David Whitmer. We cannot afford space for the whole of the communication but give those portions which are likely to prove interesting to our readers, without being responsible for any of the statements made therein." The interview was probably conducted about the same time as Poulson's interview with John Whitmer, that is, in April 1878 (see VI.B.7, JOHN WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH P. WILHELM POULSON, APR 1878).

In a letter to S. T. Mouch, 18 November 1882, David Whitmer complained about Poulson's account of the interview: "As to what you Say about the correspondence published by P Wilhelm Poulson M D Aug[ust] 20th 1878. I surely did not make the Statement which you Say he reports me to have made, for it is not according to the facts. And I have always in the fear of God, tried to give a true statement to the best of my recollection in regard to all matters which I have attempted to Explain. And I do not now remember of talking to Mr Poulson on the subject referred to" (Whitmer Collection, RLDS Church [now Community of Christ] Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri). Unfortunately, we do not know what portion of the interview Whitmer referred to since we do not have Mouch's letter of inquiry. That there was an inaccuracy suggests that Poulson probably did not keep careful notes during his interviews. At the end of the present account, Poulson states that his conversation "was *mostly* written down word for word

half an hour after the interview" (emphasis added). "Mostly" suggests that in some instances it may have gone beyond his notes and drew from memory about four months later.

OGDEN CITY, August 13, 1878.

Editors Deseret News:

Several persons have inquired of me about David Whitmer, especially since the publication in the NEWS of the letter about the late John Whitmer.[1] If the DESERET NEWS will give the space in its columns it will afford me pleasure to write what I know about him from my visit to Richmond, Mo., and also my personal conversation with him.

He is now 73 years old but is a wonderfully well preserved man, tall and erect as a pine, well proportioned, with a military bearing, Roman nose and dark eyes full of fire and expression. His forehead is broad and large, and his head nearly bald, but well balanced.

In company with a son and grandson, Mr. Whitmer keeps a livery and feed stable at Richmond, Mo., the old grandfather is principally relieved from business, but he makes his regular trips down to the stables, and to the minute as in olden time.

David Whitmer's sister was married to Oliver Cowdery,[2] whose remains rest in the graveyard at Richmond, and who practised law in that town from 1838 to 1849,[3] when he died in full faith and bore testimony about his visions. On his death-bed he requested to be buried without any display or large attendance, and he wanted no gravestone to be erected over his ashes. David Whitmer said that his brother-in-law was, in many respects, a peculiar man. David's brother, Jacob Whitmer,[4] one of the [eight] witnesses, lived and died in Richmond, and his grave is only a short distance from Cowdery's. On Jacob's grave is erected a fine marble stone. On the top of the stone appears his name and next we discover the cut of the Book of Mormon

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1. On John Whitmer (1802-78), see "Introduction to John Whitmer Collection"; also VI.B.7, JOHN WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH P. WILHELM POULSON, 13 AUG 1878.

2. Cowdery married Elizabeth Ann Whitmer (1815-92) on 18 December 1832 in Jackson County, Missouri. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

3. Rather, Cowdery practiced law in Tiffin, Ohio, during this period (see R. L. Anderson 1981, 37-65).

4. On Jacob Whitmer (1800-56), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 98.

laid open, with a blooming rose resting on the divide, and the book resting on the closed up Bible. Jacob Whitmer died April 21, 1856, aged, 56 years, 2 months and 26 days.

After a self introduction to David Whitmer and some general conversation, I remarked to him:

I—You are one of the three witnesses?

He—I am one of them.

I—And you saw the angel, and he showed you the plates?

He—The Book of Mormon is true, as true as any record can be. I saw the angel, and I saw the sword of Laban, and the breast-plate, and the Urim and Thummin, and the plates, and the director, and the angel stood before us, and he turned the leaves one by one.

I—Did the angel turn all the leaves before you as you looked on it?

He—No, not all, only that part of the book which was not sealed, and what there was sealed appeared as solid to my view as wood.

I—How many of the plates were sealed?

He—About the half of the book was sealed. Those leaves which were not sealed, about the half of the first part of the book, were numerous, and the angel turned them over before our eyes. There is yet to be given a translation about Jared's people's doings and of Nephi, and many other records and books, which all has to be done, when the time comes.

I—How large were the plates?

He—About eight inches wide and six or seven inches long, as they appeared a little wider than long, and three rings kept the plates together; one above, one in the middle and one below, so the angel could turn every leaf entirely over. The thickness was about of a common sheet of tin used by tinsmiths.

I—How did the engravings look?

He—They were characters. We copied some, and if you visit my brother John, one of the eight witnesses, who wrote for Joseph, John can show you some of the old manuscript which he borrowed from me. I must have it returned to me again, as it belongs to the Church, in connection with other records.

I—Martin Harris,[5] who died lately in Smithfield, Utah, gave a testimony in Salt Lake City Tabernacle that he saw the plates by [the] faith and power of God.

He—Martin Harris is correct. He was not by us at all when we first saw

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5. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

the angel. First when we told him what we had seen, and were the second time in prayer all together, and when the angel appeared for a second time, we saw Martin Harris by us,[6] and he saw, and we saw it, and our testimony, which we give to the world, is true exactly as you read it, we saw by the gift and power of God. As we were praying the angel stood before us in his glory, and all those things were before us, as they were laid before us on a table, and we heard the testimony about the plates, and we were commanded to bear that testimony to the world, and our testimony is true. And when the angel had finished his words, and shown us the plates, one by one, which were to be translated, then the vision was closed at once, and exactly as it came even so did the sight disappear.

I—But those things which you saw were material things, how could they come and vanish away again?

He—It is the power of God. He does those things, and his angels know how to do it. It was wonderful to us, but it was by the power of God. He had appointed his angels to be the guardians of the plates and the other things, and the angel knew how it was done.

I—Did the eight witnesses not handle the plates as a material substance?

He—We did not, but they did, because the faith of Joseph became so great that the angel, the guardian of the plates, gave the plates up to Joseph for a time, that those eight witnesses could see and handle them.

I—Did not Joseph, at an earlier period, have the full possession of those plates?

He—Yes, he did so in the commencement, but the persecution grew so hot that the angel took possession of the records, and showed those things, as he did, to Cowdery, Harris and me, in the presence of Joseph, and afterwards he was allowed to show the plates to the eight witnesses.

I—Where are the plates now?

He—In a cave, where the angel has hidden them up till the time arrives when the plates, which are sealed, shall be translated. God will yet raise up a mighty one, who shall do his work till it is finished and Jesus comes again.

I—Where is that cave?

He—In the State of New York.

I—In the Hill of Cumorah?

He—No, but not far from that place.[7] I saw the place where the plates

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6. This version conflicts with the account in Joseph Smith's history which places Harris's vision on the same day but entirely separate from that of the other two witnesses and is therefore highly questionable (see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 24-25).

7. Possibly a reference to "Miner's Hill," also located in Manchester,

were found, and a great many did so, and it awakened an excitement at the time, because the worst enemies of "Mormonism" stirred up the confusion by telling about the plates which Joseph found, and the "gold bible" which he was in possession of, so he was in constant danger of being robbed and killed.

I—How did the place look?

He—It was a stone box, and the stones looked to me as if they were cemented together. That was on the side of the hill, and a little down from the top.[8]

I—How did you know Joseph to be at that time?

He—As a very humble and meek man, and very simple minded indeed. He did the will of the Lord, and an arduous task it was to translate the Book of Mormon.

I—Did Joseph use the Urim and Thummim when he translated?

He—The Urim and Thummim were two white stones, each of them cased in as spectacles are, in a kind of silver casing, but the bow between the stones was more heavy, and longer apart between the stones, than we usually find it in spectacles. Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, Emma[9] and my brother John[10] each at different times, wrote for Joseph as he translated. ...[11]

This conversation was mostly written down word for word half an hour after the interview with David Whitmer, Esq., who will recognize it as his words, and I send it that the public may form a better idea about this truly remarkable man.

Yours truly,
P. WILHELM POULSON, M.D.

New York (see III.B.12, LORENZO SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, 17 SEP 1884, 8; III.B.15, LORENZO SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, 12 NOV 1884, 8).

8. Regarding Whitmer's claim of seeing the place of deposit, see VI.A.3, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* AUG 1875, n. 18.

9. On Emma Hale Smith (1804-79), see "Introduction to Emma Smith Collection."

10. For John Whitmer's help as a scribe, see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 22.

11. Unrelated material deleted (see Cook 1991, 23-24).

7.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEPTEMBER 1878

1. Joseph F. Smith, Diary, 7-8 September 1878, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
2. "Report of Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith," *Deseret News,* 16 November 1878; reprinted in the *Millennial Star* 40 (9 December 1878): 771-74.
3. Joseph F. Smith, Address, 25 April 1918, Joseph F. Smith Collection, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

EDITORIAL NOTE

David Whitmer was interviewed by LDS apostles Orson Pratt[1] and Joseph F. Smith[2] on 7 and 8 September 1878, in Richmond, Missouri, only three months after the Great Cyclone of 1878 destroyed about one-third of the town of Richmond, severely damaging the homes of David Whitmer and Jacob Whitmer and the G. W. Schweich & Co. livery stables. The tornado killed eighteen people (see *History of Ray County, Missouri* [St. Louis: Missouri Historical Co., 1881]). Three versions of the interview are reproduced below (see also "David Whitmer Addendum").

[*1. Joseph F. Smith Diary, 7-8 September 1878*][3]

While sitting in the clerk's, or reception, room of the hotel, conversing with the proprietor, David Whitmer—one of the Three Witnesses to the

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1. On Orson Pratt (1811-81), see introduction to I.A.16, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1839.

2. On Joseph F. Smith (1838-1918), son of Hyrum and Mary Fielding Smith and sixth president of the church, see Jenson 1971, 1:66, 3:781, 4:246, 319, 341.

3. Because access to the original journal was denied, I have taken the following transcription from Cook 1991, 24-34, who states: "Except for his correcting spelling and punctuation errors and omitting a few lines, Joseph Fielding Smith's [son of Joseph F. Smith] published version of this interview (in *Life of Joseph F. Smith*) is true to Joseph F. Smith's diary account. We have, therefore,

Book of Mormon—came by, and was called in and introduced to Brother Pratt and me. He seemed somewhat surprised and delighted at seeing his old acquaintance, Orson Pratt. After a few moments conversation he left us saying he would come back to see us again. When he returned he was in company with Col. Childs,[4] we accompanied them to Whitmer and Co.'s livery stables office, where we were introduced to D[avid]. Whitmer's son, David J.,[5] and grandson, George Schweich,[6] John C. Whitmer,[7] son of Jacob Whitmer, Col. James W. Black[8] and several other gentlemen. We spent an hour in desultory conversation, on matters generally relative to Utah, and parted for dinner, agreeing to meet Mr. [David] Whitmer at his office again at 4:30. He apologized for not inviting us to his house, saying he and his family were "worn-out" and it was "washday." He said the heat affected his head, and he had to be very careful of his health. He was born Jan. 7, 1805, making him 73 years old last January, eleven months and sixteen days older than the Prophet Joseph Smith. At 4:30 Brother Pratt and I, agreeable to promise, called at Mr. Whitmer's office, where we found Messrs. James R.

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used the more accessible published account, adding the minor omissions left out by Joseph Fielding Smith." Cf. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City, 1938), 241-49. Unrelated material has been deleted with ellipses.

4. Jacob T. Child (1833-?) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After serving a five-year apprenticeship in the office of the *Richmond* (Virginia) *Whig* and editing several papers in Missouri, Child became owner and editor of the *Richmond Conservator.* He was also visible in state politics and was elected as Richmond's mayor in the late 1870s (*History of Ray County, Mo.,* 1881, 513-15). Child is listed in the 1870 census of Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, as a thirty-seven-year-old "Publisher" (1870:587). Although a non-Mormon, he vigorously defended David Whitmer's integrity in the columns of his paper (see, e.g., *Richmond Conservator,* 22 August 1884).

5. David J. Whitmer, age thirty-six, is listed in the 1870 census of Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, as a livery stable keeper (1870:587).

6. George W. Schweich (1853-1926), son of Julia Whitmer Schweich, is listed in the 1870 census of Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, as a seventeen-year-old "School Student" (1870:587).

7. John C. Whitmer is listed with his wife, Mary, in the 1870 census of Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, as a thirty-five-year-old farmer (1870:557).

8. James W. Black appears in the 1870 census of Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, as a forty-five-year-old lawyer from Virginia (1870:587). He was married to Susan Child, sister of Jacob T. Child (*History of Ray County, Mo.,* 1881, 514).

B. Vancleave,[9] John C. Whitmer, W. W. Warner[10] and George Schweich. Soon after Father David came in. The office being rather too public for any private conversation, we invited the party to our room at the hotel, to which they consented. When comfortably seated the following questions were asked and answered:

Orson Pratt: "Can you tell the date of the restoration of the Apostleship by Peter, James and John?"

David Whitmer: "I do not know. Joseph never told me. I can only tell you what I know: I will not testify to anything I do not know."[11]

Joseph F. Smith: "Did Oliver Cowdery[12] die here in Richmond?"

David Whitmer: "Yes, he lived here about a year, I think, before his death; he died in my father's house, right here."

Orson Pratt: "Do you remember what time you saw the plates?"

David Whitmer: "It was in June 1829, the very last part of the month, and the eight witnesses, I think, the next day. Joseph showed them the plates himself. We (the Three Witnesses) not only saw the plates of the Book of Mormon, but the Brass Plates, the plates containing the record of the wickedness of the people of the world, and many other plates. The fact is, it was just as though Joseph, Oliver and I were sitting right here on a log, when we were overshadowed by a light. It was not like the light of the sun, nor like that of a fire, but more glorious and beautiful. It extended away round us, I cannot tell how far, but in the midst of this light, immediately before us, about as far off as he sits (pointing to John C. Whitmer who was sitting 2 or 3 feet from him) there appeared, as it were, a table, with many records on it, besides the plates of the Book of Mormon; also the sword of Laban, the Directors (i.e. the ball which Lehi had) and the Interpreters.[13] I saw them just as plain as I see this bed (striking his hand upon the bed beside him), and I heard

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9. James R. B. Van Cleave (1853-?) was born in Knoxville, Knox County, Illinois. Educated at Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois, he became secretary to Illinois state senator W. J. Campbell. Van Cleave was an active Republican and a traveling correspondent for the *New York Herald* and *Chicago Times*. In 1882 he married Josephine Helen Schweich of Richmond, Missouri, granddaughter of David Whitmer, which explains his presence at the Whitmer residence (Raum 1900, 26, 271).

10. W. W. Warner remains unidentified.

11. See VI.A.24, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ZENAS H. GURLEY, 14 JAN 1885.

12. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

13. See D&C 17:1.

the voice of the Lord as distinctly as I ever heard anything in my life declaring that they (the plates) were translated by the gift and power of God."

Orson Pratt: "Did you see the Angel at this time?"

David Whitmer: "Yes, he stood before us. Martin Harris[14] was not with us at this time. I don't think he saw all that we did, but our testimony as recorded in the Book of Mormon is strictly and absolutely true just as it is there written. Before I knew anything about Joseph Smith I had heard about him and the plates from persons who declared they knew he had them and swore they would get them from him, and that he had promised them an interest in them when he should get them. The fact is he could not, for they were not to be made merchandise of, nor to be a matter of profit to any one—they were strictly for sacred purposes, and when Oliver Cowdery went to Pennsylvania he promised to write me what he should learn about the matter, which he did. He told me Joseph had told him his [Oliver's] secret thoughts and all he had meditated about going to see him, which no man on earth knew, as he supposed, but himself.[15] So he stopped to write for Joseph.[16] Soon after this Joseph sent for me to come to Harmony, to get him and Oliver and bring them to my father's house.[17] I did not know what to do. I was pressed with my work. I had some 20 acres to plow and so I concluded I would finish plowing, and then go. One morning I got up as usual to go to work. On going to the field I found between 5 and 7 acres of my ground had been plowed during the night. I don't know who did it, but it was done, just as I would have done it myself, and the plow was left standing in the furrow. This enabled me to start sooner. When I arrived at Harmony, Joseph and Oliver were coming toward me, and met me some little distance from the house. Oliver told me that Joseph had told him when I started from home, where I had stopped the first night, how I read the sign at the tavern, where I stopped the next night and that I would be there that day before dinner, and this was why they had come out to meet me, all of which was exactly as Joseph had told Oliver, at which I was greatly astonished.[18] When I was returning to Fayette with Joseph and Oliver, all of us riding in the wagon, Oliver and I on an old fashioned wooden spring seat and Joseph behind us, we were suddenly approached by a very pleasant, nice looking old man in a clear open

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14. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

15. See D&C 6.

16. Oliver Cowdery began as scribe on 7 April 1829.

17. This occurred in early June 1829.

18. See VI.A.17, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH JAMES H. HART, 21 AUG 1883 & 10 MAR 1884.

place, who saluted us with 'Good morning, it is very warm,' at the same instant wiping his face or forehead with his hand. We returned the salutation and by a sign from Joseph I invited him to ride if he was going our way, but he said very pleasantly, 'No, I am going to Cumorah.' This was something new to me, I did not know what Cumorah meant, and as I looked enquiringly at Joseph, the old man instantly disappeared so that I did not see him again."

Joseph F. Smith: "Did you notice his appearance?"

David Whitmer: "I should think I did. He was, I should think, about 5 feet 9 or 10 inches and heavy set, about such a man as James Vancleave, there, but heavier. His face was as large. He was dressed in a suit of brown, woolen clothes; his hair and beard were white, about like Brother Pratt's, but his beard was not so heavy. I also remember that he had a sort of knapsack on his back, and something was in it which was shaped like a book. It was the messenger who had the plates.

"Soon after our arrival home, I saw something which led me to the belief that the plates were placed or concealed in my father's barn. I frankly asked Joseph if my supposition was right, and he told me it was.

"Sometime after this my mother was going to milk the cows when she was met out near the barn by this same old man, (as I suppose from her description of him) who said to her 'you have been very faithful and diligent in your labours but you are tried because of the increase of your toil, it is proper therefore that you should receive a witness, that your faith may be strengthened' and thereupon he showed her the plates. My Father and Mother had a large family of their own. The addition to it therefore of Joseph, Emma and Oliver very greatly increased the toil and anxiety of my mother and altho she had never complained she had sometimes felt that her labor was too much or at least she was beginning to feel so. This circumstance however completely removed all such feelings and nerved her up for her increased responsibilities."[19]

Orson Pratt: "Have you any idea when the records will be brought forth?"

David Whitmer: "When we see things in the Spirit and by the power of God they seem to be right here present. The signs of the times indicate the near approach of the coming forth of the other plates, but when it will be, I cannot tell. The Three Nephites are at work among the lost tribes and else-

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19. See VI.C.4, JOHN C. WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW JENSON AND EDWARD STEVENSON, 11 OCT 1888.

where. John the Revelator is at work, and I believe the time will come suddenly, before we are prepared for it."

Orson Pratt: "Have you got the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon?"

David Whitmer: "I have. It is in Oliver Cowdery's handwriting. He placed it in my care at his death, and charged me to preserve it as long as I lived. It is safe, and well preserved."

Joseph F. Smith: "What will you do with it at your death?"

David Whitmer: "I will leave it with my nephew, David Whitmer, son of my brother Jacob and my namesake."

Orson Pratt: "Would you not part with it?"

David Whitmer: "No. Oliver charged me to keep it and Joseph said my father's house should keep the records. I consider these things sacred and would not barter them for money."

Joseph F. Smith: "We would not offer you money in the light of bartering for the manuscript, but we would like to see them preserved in some manner where they would be safe from casualties and from the caprice of men, in some institution that will not die as a man does."[20]

David Whitmer: "This is all right. While camping around here in a tent and all my effects exposed to the weather, everything in the trunk where the manuscript was kept became mouldy, but that was preserved, not even being discolored."

His camping in a tent had reference to their circumstances after the destruction of their property by the cyclone. His barn and dwelling having been destroyed, save and except only the room in his house in which the record, or manuscript, was kept. This was spared, not even the ceiling being seriously impaired. This event by the whole family and connections is accepted

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20. Subsequently Whitmer claimed that Smith and Pratt had offered him "a fabulous price" for the manuscript (see VI.A.13, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881). In 1901, Joseph F. Smith denied this: "It [the manuscript] has been repeatedly offered to us, and numerous false reports have been put in circulation with regard to our desire to obtain possession of it, but we have at no time regarded it as of any value, neither have we ever offered any money to procure it, all the stories to the contrary notwithstanding, for we have always known it was not the original, as aforesaid, and as many editions of the Book of Mormon have been printed, and tens of thousands of copies of it circulated throughout the world you can readily perceive that this manuscript really is of no value to anyone" (Joseph F. Smith to Samuel Russell, 19 March 1901, Russell Collection, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah; cited in Cook 1991, 257-58).

as a miraculous interposition of Divine Providence, for the preservation of the sacred treasure.

"Do you think," said Phil[ander] Page,[21] a son of Hiram Page,[22] one of the Eight Witnesses, "that the Almighty cannot take care of his own?"

Sunday, Sept. 8, 1878. I enjoyed a very comfortable night's rest and felt somewhat better this morning, though I am still troubled with cough. Some little time after breakfast Brother Pratt and I went down to David Whitmer's office, and from there, by invitation, returned to his house. Here we met David C. Whitmer, son of Jacob Whitmer, whom we had not before seen, and several others, among whom was Philander Page, the son of Hiram Page, one of the Eight Witnesses of the Book of Mormon. After the usual ceremony of introduction, David Whitmer brought out and showed us the manuscript of the Book of Mormon, mostly in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery, some of the writings was thought to be in the handwriting of John and Christian Whitmer, but only comparatively a few pages.[23] The fact also appeared that the names of all the witnesses were subscribed in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery. When the question was asked David Whitmer if he and the other witnesses did not subscribe their own names to the respective testimonies, he replied that they did. Then he was asked, "Where are the original documents?" That he did not know, but supposed Oliver had copied them, but this was an exact copy. Someone suggested that he ought to certify to it, he being the only witness left, but the lawyer, Mr. David C. Whitmer, son of Jacob, thought he had better take time to reflect about it.

I suggested that it was possible there were two copies, but this was flatly denied by Brother David Whitmer, who said according to the best of his knowledge there never was but the one copy. Now herein he is evidently mistaken, as Joseph Smith expressly states in his history that before the Ms. [manuscript] was sent to the printers an exact copy was made and it is my belief that this is that copy and not the original, or if it is the original then there

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21. Philander Alma Page (1832-1919) was the son of Book of Mormon witness Hiram Page. Philander is listed in the 1870 census of Grape Grove, Ray County, Missouri, as a thirty-eight-year-old farmer, originally from Ohio (1870:449).

22. On Hiram Page (1800-52), see introduction to VI.C.1, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM MCLELLIN, 30 MAY 1847.

23. Brigham Young University professor Royal Skousen has identified, in the printer's manuscript, the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, and an unknown scribe (see Skousen 2001, 9-10).

is another copy, or was, and with that no doubt are the actual signatures of the eleven witnesses to their respective testimonies.[24]

Brother Pratt felt closely after the subject of procuring the Ms. [manuscript], but we found that this was impossible to all human appearances. The whole Whitmer family are deeply impressed with the sacredness of this relic, and are actually so imbued with the idea and faith that it is under the immediate protection of the Almighty, that not only the Ms. [manuscript] itself is safe from all possible contingencies, but that it is a souvenir of protection to the place, or house, in which it might be kept, to the possessor. I do not therefore believe they could be induced to part with it for love or money, nor fear or favor. ...

[25][After supper that same evening, David Whitmer, J. B. R. Vancleave and George Schweich came to the room in the hotel occupied by Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith and spent much of the evening with them conversing on many subjects. ... On this occasion, David Whitmer] again confirmed & repeated the circumstances of the messenger showing the Plates of the Book of Mormon to his mother[, this messenger being] the same person who appeared to them on the road from Harmony[,] Susquehana Co, Pa. to Fayette, Seneca Co.[,] N.Y. He also repeated the names of the plates he and Oliver and Joseph saw viz the Book of Mormon, of Ether, the Brass Plates, and the plates containing the Record of all the secret combinations, sins & abominations of the world since Adam to the time they were engraved, with the sword of Laban—the "Directors" and the "Interpreters."

I always knew that David Whitmer's testimony was true, since I received the witness myself, but now I know that David Whitmer is as con-

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24. On another occasion, Joseph F. Smith recalled this part of his conversation with Whitmer: "I had the temerity to call the attention of Father Whitmer to the fact that the manuscript in his possession was but the copy of the original, and proved it to him by this circumstance: I asked him if he and the other witnesses each signed their own name to their testimony, and he unhesitatingly replied, 'Yes, we each signed our name.' Then I said, calling his attention to the names of the witnesses as inscribed in the manuscript, 'how is it that all these names are written by one man?' He eagerly grasped the manuscript containing the testimony and glanced over the names. 'Well,' he said, 'I don't know how this is, Oliver must have copied them.' Still he persisted [in the idea that] it was the original manuscript, and not wishing to have an argument with him over the matter I let it drop" (Joseph F. Smith to Samuel Russell, 19 March 1901, Russell Collection, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah; cited in Cook 1991, 258-59).

25. Cook has inserted bracketed material from Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City, 1938), 248 (Cook 1991, 33, n. 6).

scious of the truth of that testimony as he is of his own existence. No man can hear him tell his experience in these matters but he can see and sense that he is conscientiously telling the truth of his own knowledge. Some might say he was deceived, but I know that he was not. ...

The visit was an interesting one, but I regretted that the manuscript of the Book of Mormon, even though it was the copy made for the printer, was in the hands of men who were unworthy and who were surrounded by benighted, darkened minds.

[*2. Published Interview, 16 November 1878*]

NEW YORK CITY,
September 17, 1878.

President John Taylor and Council of the Twelve:

Dear Brethren.—We desire to make the following hastily written report of our mission to the Eastern States, which we would have made from time to time as we journied along, but for the hurry and inconvenience of daily travel. ...

At Richmond [Missouri] we put up at the Shaw House [which was,] before the cyclone, a three-story brick building, but has [been] restored, since the tempest, [to] only two stories, now kept by Mr. Warren Ewing, son-in-law to the original proprietor Mr. S. Shaw, once a freighter to Utah, now dead. On Saturday morning, Sept. 7th, we met Mr. David Whitmer, the last remaining one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon. He is a good sized man, 73 years of age last January, and well preserved. (He was born Jan. 7, 1805), he is close shaven, his hair perfectly white and rather thin, he has a large head and a very pleasant, manly countenance that one would readily perceive to be an index to a conscientious, honest heart. He seemed wonderfully pleased as well as surprised at seeing Elder Orson Pratt. Said he would not have known him [as] he had grown so fat and stout, he remembered him as a slender, bashful, timid boy. After a few moments conversation he excused himself, saying he would return again to see us. This meeting was in the bar-room of the hotel. When he called again he was in company with Col. [Jacob T.] Childs, a middle aged man, and a resident of the place. By invitation we accompanied them to Mr. Whitmer's office, where we were introduced to Mr. Mr. David J. Whitmer, (eldest son of David), Mr. Geo[rge]. Schweich, (grandson of the old gentleman)[,] Mr. John C. Whitmer, (son of Jacob Whitmer), Col. James W. Black, of Richmond, and several others. A couple of hours were very pleasantly passed in conversation, principally on

Utah matters, when we parted for dinner, agreeing to meet Mr. [David] Whitmer again at his office at 4:30 p.m.

Agreeable to appointment we met Mr. Whitmer and his friends, at his office, but as the place was too public for private conversation and as it seemed impossible to obtain a private personal interview with David Whitmer, by himself, we invited him and such of his friends as he saw proper to fetch along, to our room in the hotel. Mr. Whitmer apologized for not inviting us to his house, as it was "wash day," and he and his wife were "worn out" with the extra labor, exposure, &c., &c., consequent upon rebuilding since the cyclone. He accepted our invitation to our room and brought with him James R. B. Vancleave, (a fine looking, intelligent young newspaper man of Chicago, who is paying his addresses to Miss Josephine Schweich grand-daughter of David Whitmer)[,] George Schweich, (grandson), John C. Whitmer, (son of Jacob), W. W. Warner, and another person whose name we did not learn. In the presence of these the following, in substance, as noticed in brother Joseph F. Smith's journal, is the account of the interview.

Elder O. Pratt to D. Whitmer. Can you tell the date of the bestowal of the Apostleship upon Joseph, by Peter, James and John?

D.W. I do not know, Joseph never told me. I can only tell you what I know, for I will not testify to anything I do not know.

J.F.S. to D.W. Did Oliver Cowdery die here in Richmond?

D.W. Yes, he lived here, I think, about one year before his death. He died in my father's house[,] right here, in January, 1849. Phineas Young was here at the time.

Elder O.P. Do you remember what time you saw the plates?

D.W. It was in June, 1829—the latter part of the month, and the eight witnesses saw them, I think, the next day or the day after, (i.e. one or two days after). Joseph showed them the plates himself, but the angel showed us (the three witnesses) the plates, as I suppose to fulfil the words of the book itself. Martin Harris was not with us at this time, he obtained a view of them afterwards, (the same day). Joseph, Oliver and myself were together when I saw them. We not only saw the plates of the Book of Mormon but also the brass plates, the plates of the Book of Ether, the plates containing the records of the wickedness and secret combinations of the people of the world down to the time of their being engraved, and many other plates. The fact is[,] it was just as though Joseph, Oliver and I were sitting just here on a log, when we were overshadowed by a light. It was not like the light of the sun nor like that of a fire, but more glorious and beautiful. It extended away round us, I cannot tell how far, but in the midst of this light about as far off as he sits (pointing to John C. Whitmer sitting a few feet from him), there appeared as it were, a table with many records or plates upon it, besides the plates of the

Book of Mormon, also the Sword of Laban, the directors—i.e., the ball which Lehi had, and the interpreters. I saw them just as plain as I see this bed (striking the bed beside him with his hand), and I heard the voice of the Lord, as distinctly as I ever heard anything in my life, declaring that the records of the plates of the Book of Mormon were translated ["]by the gift and power of God."

Elder O.P.—Did you see the Angel at this time?

D.W.—Yes; he stood before us, our testimony as recorded in the Book of Mormon is strictly and absolutely true, just as it is there written. Before I knew Joseph, I had heard about him and the plates from persons who declared they knew he had them, and swore they would get them from him. When Oliver Cowdery went to Pennsylvania, he promised to write me what he should learn about these matters, which he did. He wrote me that Joseph had told him his [Oliver's] secret thoughts, and all he had meditated about [while] going to see him, which no man on earth knew, as he supposed, but himself, and so he stopped to write for Joseph.

Soon after this, Joseph sent for me (D.W.) to come to Harmony to get him and Oliver and bring them to my father's house. I did not know what to do, I was pressed with my work. I had some 20 acres to plow, so I concluded I would finish plowing and then go, I got up one morning to go to work as usual, and on going to the field, found between 5 and 7 acres of my ground had been plowed during the night.

I don't know who did it; but it was done just as I would have done it myself, and the plow was left standing in the furrow.

This enabled me to start sooner. When I arrived at Harmony, Joseph and Oliver were coming toward me, and met me some distance from the house, Oliver told me that Joseph had informed him when I started from home, where I had stopped the first night, how I read the sign at the tavern, where I stopped the next night, etc., and that I would be there that day before dinner, and this was why they had come out to meet me; all of which was exactly as Joseph had told Oliver, at which I was greatly astonished. When I was returning to Fayette with Joseph and Oliver all of us riding in the wagon, Oliver and I on an old fashioned wooden spring seat and Joseph behind us, while traveling along in a clear open place, a very pleasant, nice-looking old man suddenly appeared by the side of our wagon who saluted us with, "good morning, it is very warm," at the same time wiping his face or forehead with his hand. We returned the salutation, and by a sign from Joseph I invited him to ride if he was going our way. But he said very pleasantly, "No, I am going to Cumorah." This name was something new to me, I did not know what Cumorah meant. We all gazed at him and at each other, and as I looked

round inquiringly of Joseph the old man instantly disappeared, so that I did not see him again.

J.F.S.—Did you notice his appearance?

D.W.—I should think I did, he was, I should think, about 5 feet 8 or 9 inches tall and heavy set, about such a man as James Vancleave there, but heavier, his face was as large, he was dressed in a suit of brown woolen clothes, his hair and beard were white, like Brother Pratt's, but his beard was not so heavy. I also remember that he had on his back a sort of knapsack with something in [it], shaped like a book. It was the messenger who had the plates, who had taken them from Joseph just prior to our starting from Harmony. Soon after our arrival home, I saw something which led me to the belief that the plates were placed or concealed in my father's barn. I frankly asked Joseph if my supposition was right, and he told me it was. Sometime after this, my mother was going to milk the cows, when she was met out near the yard by the same old man (judging by her description of him) who said to her, "You have been very faithful and diligent in your labors, but you are tried because of the increase of your toil, it is proper therefore that you should receive a witness that your faith may be strengthened." Thereupon he showed her the plates. My father and mother had a large family of their own, the addition to it therefore of Joseph, his wife Emma and Oliver very greatly increased the toil and anxiety of my mother. And although she had never complained she had sometimes felt that her labor was too much, or at least she was perhaps beginning to feel so. This circumstance, however, completely removed all such feelings, and nerved her up for her increased responsibilities. ...

Elder O.P.—Have you in your possession the original Mss. [manuscripts] of the Book of Mormon?

D.W.—I have, they are in O[liver]. Cowdery's hand writing. He placed them in my care at his death, and charged me to preserve them as long as I lived; they are safe and well preserved.

J.F.S.—What will be done with them at your death?

D.W.—I will leave them to my nephew, David Whitmer, son of my brother Jacob, and my name sake.

O.P.—Would you not part with them to a purchaser?

D.W.—No. Oliver charged me to keep them, and Joseph said my father's house should keep the records. I consider these things sacred, and would not part with nor barter them for money.

J.F.S.—We would not offer you money in the light of bartering for the Mss. [manuscripts], but we would like to see them preserved in some manner where they would be safe from casualties and from the caprices of men, in some institution that will not die as man does.

D.W.—That is all right. While camping around here in a tent, all my effects exposed to the weather, everything in the trunk where the Mss. [manuscripts] were kept became mouldy, etc., but they were preserved, not even being discolored, (we supposed his camping in a tent, etc., had reference to his circumstances after the cyclone in June last [)], except only, as he and others affirm, the room in which the Mss. [manuscripts] were kept. That was the only part of the house which was not demolished, and even the ceiling of that room was but little impaired. "Do you think," said Philander Page, a son of Hiram Page, one of the eight witnesses, "that the Almighty cannot take care of his own?"

Next day (Sunday, Sept. 8) Mr. Whitmer invited us to his house where, in the presence of David Whitmer, Esq., (son of Jacob), Philander Page, J. R. B. Vancleave, David J. Whitmer, (son of David the witness) George Schweich, (grandson of David) Colonel Childs and others, David Whitmer brought out the Mss. [manuscripts] of the Book of Mormon. We examined them closely and those who knew the handwriting pronounced the whole of them, excepting comparatively a few pages, to be in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery. It was thought that these few pages were in the handwritings of Emma Smith and John and Christian Whitmer.[26]

We found that the names of the eleven witnesses were, however, subscribed in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery. When the question was asked Mr. Whitmer if he and the other witnesses did or did not sign the testimonies themselves, Mr. W[hitmer]. replied, "each signed his own name." "Then where are the original signatures?" D.W.—I don't know, I suppose Oliver copied them, but this I know is an exact copy." Some one suggested that he being the last one left of the 11 witnesses, he ought to certify to this copy. Lawyer D[avid]. Whitmer (Jacob[']s son) suggested that he had better reflect about it first and be very cautious.

J.F.S. suggested that perhaps there were *two copies* of the manuscripts, but Mr. Whitmer replied that according to the best of his knowledge there never was but the one copy. Herein of course he is evidently uninformed.

Elder O. Pratt again felt closely after the the subject of procuring the Mss. [manuscripts], but we found that nothing would move him on this point. The whole Whitmer family are deeply impressed with the sacredness of this relic. And so thoroughly imbued are they with the idea and faith that it is under the immediate protection of the Almighty, that in their estimation not only are the Mss. [manuscripts] themselves safe from all possible contingencies, but that they are a source of protection to the place or house in

26. See n. 23 above.

which they may be kept, and, it may be to those who have possession of them. ...

This ended our interview with the last remaining witness who saw the plates of the Book of Mormon. ...

[3. Joseph F. Smith Address, 25 April 1918][27]

Joseph F. Smith—25 April 1918

The last meeting I attended at Los Angeles [was a sacrament service], [and] the theme in the Sunday School, just previous to the meeting, had been the early history of the Church, involving the testimonies of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, the organization of the twelve, and the expulsion of the Latter-day Saints from Missouri and Illinois, the Martyrdom, and all that sort of thing. When they asked me to talk, I told them that I had been impressed by what I had heard in the Sunday School, and, if it were agreeable, I felt a little reminiscent myself, and would give them a little of my remembrance. So I took up the organization of the Twelve, the apostasy of Thomas B. Marsh, the testimony of David Whitmer all the way through with reference to the scenes connected with the early rise of the Church. I told David's history as he related it to Bro. Orson Pratt and myself in regard to going from Seneca County, New York, to Harmony, Pennsylvania, when he received a letter from Joseph Smith through Oliver Cowdery. Oliver Cowdery and the Whitmers were acquainted before this time, and it was through Oliver Cowdery's acquaintance that Joseph became acquainted with the Whitmers in the first place. Joseph had written to David Whitmer as a friend of Oliver to come to Pennsylvania and take him and Oliver away from there, on account of the persecutions and threats and the watchings that were going on in Harmony,—men trying to get possession of the plates. David had told me all about that history, and [I] related it in the meeting at Los Angeles, also in regard to the description Joseph gave to Oliver Cowdery before David Whitmer reached Harmony; how he said, "David left home on such a day, and he drove to such a place and there watered his team, ate his lunch, then drove to another place," and so on. He gave a perfect description of what David did on the way; that he read the tavern sign, and all such things, and said, he will arrive here at such and such a time. Oliver Cowdery stole away and went out to meet David, and when they met, Oliver took David aside and said, "David, Joseph has told me so and so; you left home at such a time, and

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27. Because access to the original document was denied, I have relied on the transcription in Cook 1991, 48-51.

stopped at such a place," and then went on to describe David's entire journey until Oliver met him. "Now," Oliver said, "I want to know what there is about it." "Well," David said, "how did Joseph know?" Oliver replied, "I do not know, but that is what he told me." And David remarked that if the Prophet had been with him and traveled every foot of the way, he could not have told the facts more correctly. David inquired again, "How did he know?" Oliver replied, "I do not know, only that he told me as I have told you, and I wanted to know from you if he were right." When they started for New York Joseph told them how they would travel over the rolling country and over the prairie. He came to one of those rolling parries as they were driving along and he [David] described his wagon just as an ordinary wagon with two long poles in it at each end across the end gates of the wagon box, and then two boards laid across that for seats on those hickory poles. Joseph and Emma were on the hind seat and Oliver and David on the front seat.[28] In the middle of this prairie, all of a sudden, there appeared a man walking along the road, and David said he raised his ~~head~~ hat and rubbed his brow ~~like that~~, as if he were a little warm, and said, good morning to them, and they said good morning. Oliver and David looked at each other and began to marvel and wonder: Where did he come form, what does it mean? David described him saying he had on something like an old-fashioned knapsack, but of course a little differently formed, right across his shoulders, and on his back he was carrying something of considerable weight. They looked round to Joseph inquiringly: What does it mean? And Joseph said, "Ask him to ride." So David, who was teamster, asked him if he would get in and ride with them. He said, "No, I am just going over to Cumorah."[29] David said, "Cumorah? Cumorah? What does that mean?" He had never heard of Cumorah, and he said, "I thought I knew this country all around here, but I never heard of Cumorah" and he inquired about it. While he was looking around and trying to ascertain what the mystery was, the man was gone, and when he looked back he did not see him any more. Then he demanded, "What does it mean?" Joseph informed him that the man was Moroni, and that the bundle on his back contained plates which Joseph had delivered to him before they

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28. Joseph F. Smith's journal neglects to mention Emma on this trip. In fact, there is some ambiguity about whether Emma accompanied her husband on this trip or came to Fayette a short time later (see VI.A.17, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEWS WITH JAMES H. HART, 21 AUG 1883 & 10 MAR 1884, which states that Emma came later).

29. Cumorah is the name the Book of Mormon gives to the hill in Manchester, New York, where the plates were hidden (cf. Morm. 6:2-6; D&C 128:20).

departed from Harmony, Susquehanna County, and that he was taking them for safety, and would return them when he (Joseph) reached father Whitmer's home. There was a long talk about this. David gave us a description also of what occurred when Joseph and Oliver and Emma reached his mother's home. His mother had a large family of boys, only one girl. It was ~~fashionable~~ customary for the women to do all the milking and all the hard work, and she was feeling rather down-hearted and discouraged, and she wondered how she was going to provide for all her own family and for this additional number to be taken care of. She went down to milk the cow and was feeling very gloomy about it, she hardly thought it would be possible for her to take care of them all. David said that when she came back she was full of joy. He did not know the reason for her rejoicing until she said, "I have seen the messenger." David said she described the very man they saw walking on the prairies and he told her who he was; said that Joseph had come there for safety and he was in their care and protection. He told her that her burdens would be lightened, and she would enjoy her service, and not to be bowed down or sorrowful, and David said after that she was the happiest woman in the world. She met her added obligations with such alacrity and pleasure that they were not trouble to her. She described the individual just as David and Oliver had seen him and they knew that she had seen the same messenger.

There was a great deal more about the letter from Joseph. David was plowing at the time, it was early in the Spring, and he was a little late with his Spring work; he had his field to plow and get into grain, so when he got the letter from Joseph he concluded that he would wait till he plowed his field and then he would go to Harmony. So he plowed that day and left his plow standing in the furrow where he unhitched for the night, taking his team to the barn, and left the plow standing in the furrow. The next morning he hitched up his team early and started back to the field, and when he got there, lo and behold, most of the field had been plowed during the night. David told this story before a crowd of men, as many as there are here, in a hotel at Richmond [Missouri], most of whom were the descendants of the mob who drove the Latter-day Saints out of Missouri. One of those present said, "Well, who did it,—who plowed your field?" David replied, "I do not know." "How could it be plowed at night, and so much of it?" "There was only one plow and one team, who could do it?" David could only reply, "I do not know, I cannot tell you, all I know is it was plowed." And he said, "It was a testimony to me that I did not have any business to put off going after Joseph. I hitched up my team and instead of going to work with the plow and started for Pennsylvania." David told that before the crowd and one after another passed remarks like this: "it does not make any difference what you

may say about Father Whitmer's testimony, there is one thing sure, he believes every word he says, there is no doubt about it. So far as we know he is absolutely honest." I heard them pass just such remarks about the circumstance. Bro. Orson Pratt and I and this crowd of friends who had been invited in were sitting around in our room in the hotel when this took place. In the meeting at Los Angeles I told them this story, occupying about an hour and a half, and the people sat spellbound.

8.
J. L. TRAUGHBER TO *SAINTS' HERALD*, 13 OCTOBER 1879

J. L. Traughber to the Editor, 13 October 1879, *Saints' Herald* 26 (15 November 1879): 341.

EDITORIAL NOTE

John L. Traughber (1854-1908), described as "an old friend of David Whitmer" (Wymetal 1886, 190), was born in Missouri. At the time of his death, he was preparing a book on Mormonism. His manuscript of over 500 pages survives with family members. He died at Doucette, Texas (*Salt Lake Tribune,* 2 December 1985).

Editors Herald:—In the *Saints' Herald* of April 15th, 1879, I notice an article from the pen of Elder T. W. Smith, which originally appeared in the Fall River (Mass.) *Herald,*[1] in which article the writer makes mention of the testimony of David Whitmer, as published in the *Chicago Times,* in 1875,[2] and further says:

"I personally heard him state, in January, 1877 [1876], in his own house in Richmond, Ray county, Mo., in most positive language, that he did truly see, in broad day-light, a bright and most beautiful being, an 'angel from heaven,' who did hold in his hands the golden plates, which he turned over leaf by leaf, explaining the contents here and there."

I have heard the same from the mouth of Father Whitmer, more than once; and every time I ever heard him tell the particulars of that glorious scene, he always told it just the same; and as far as I have ever heard, from reliable witnesses, he has always told the same story—"straight as a nail." Had Elder Smith stopped at the end of the above quoted sentence, I would have had no ground for bringing his name into this article; but he did not. He further adds:

"He also described the size and general appearance of the plates, and he further said that he saw Joseph translate, by the aid of Urim and Thummim, time and again, and he then produced a large pile of foolscap paper closely

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1. *Fall River* (Massachusetts) *Herald,* 28 March 1879; reprinted in *Saints' Herald* 26 (15 April 1879): 128; see "David Whitmer Addendum."

2. See VI.A.3, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* AUG 1875.

written in a very fair hand, which he declared was the manuscript written mainly by Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris, as the translation was being read by the aid of the Urim and Thummim of the characters on the plates by Joseph Smith, which work of translation and transcription he frequently saw."

I, too, have seen the "manuscripts" and examined them. I, too, have heard Father Whitmer say that he was present many times while Joseph was translating; but I never heard him say that the translation was made by aid of Urim and Thummim; but in every case, and his testimony is always the same, he declared that Joseph first offered prayer, then took a dark colored, opaque stone, called a "seer-stone," and placed it in the crown of his hat, then put his face into the hat, and read the translation as it appeared before him. This was the daily method of procedure, as I have often heard Father Whitmer declare; and, as it is generally agreed to by parties who know the facts, that a considerable portion of the work of translation was performed in a room of his father's house, where he then resided, there can be no doubt but what Father David Whitmer is a competent witness of the manner of translating.

I am aware of the fact that the "Urim and Thummim" story has long been foisted upon the world as the true account of the origin of the Book of Mormon; but the times demand, and, the interest of truth demands, that the truth should be told. We need not be afraid of truth; and I greatly doubt if anybody will be ultimately benefitted by the perpetuation of a falsehood, which was invented for the purpose of gaining prestige, in the minds of the people, for ambitious leaders.

The proofs are clear and positive that the story of Urim and Thummim Translation does not date back, for its origin, further than 1833, or, between that date and 1835; for it is not found in any printed document of the Church of Christ up to the latter part of the year 1833,[3] or the year 1834.[4] The "Book of Commandments" to the Church of Christ, published in Independence, Mo., in 1833, does not contain any allusion to Urim and Thummim; though

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3. The term "Urim and Thummim" was evidently introduced in 1833 by W. W. Phelps, then editor of *The Evening and the Morning Star,* who wrote: "It [the Book of Mormon] was translated by the gift and power of God, by unlearned man, through the aid of a pair of Interpreters, or spectacles—(known, perhaps, in ancient days as Teraphim, or Urim and Thummim)" (January 1833, [58]).

4. In his letter to W. W. Phelps, dated 7 September 1834, Oliver Cowdery wrote: "he [Joseph Smith] translated, with *Urim* and *Thummim,* or, as the Nephites would have said, 'Interpreters'" (III.G.6, OLIVER COWDERY TO W. W. PHELPS, 7 SEP 1834, 14).

the term was inserted in some of the revelations in their reprint in the "Book of Doctrine and Covenants" in 1835.[5]

Who originated the Urim and Thummim story, I do not know; but this I do know, that it is not found in the first printed book of revelations to the Church of Christ, and there is other testimony to show that it is not true. It is proper to notice what it is claimed the Urim and Thummim was. P[arley]. P. and O[rson]. Pratt both say it was an *instrument* composed of two clear or transparent stones set in the two rims of a bow. It is also confounded with the "Interpreters," which were shaped something like a pair of ordinary spectacles, though larger.

Now let us see. David Whitmer declares, and I have shown him to be a competent witness, that Joseph Smith translated by aid of a dark stone, called a "seer stone," which was placed in the crown of a hat, into which Joseph thrust his face.

In the *Saints' Herald* of June 15th, 1879, pages 190 and 191, I find a letter from President W. W. Blair, in which he states some facts, learned from Mr. Michael Morse, who married a Miss [Tryal] Hale, "a sister to S[iste]r. Emma." Among other things which I have not space to notice here, but which your readers can find by following the reference I have given, President Blair says:

"He states that Joseph told him that he found the gold plates, from whence it is claimed the Book of Mormon was translated, in a stone box. (Some of late have said that Joseph at first professed to have found them in an iron box). He further states that when Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon, he (Morse), had occasion more than once to go into his immediate presence, and saw him engaged at his work of translation. The mode of procedure consisted in Joseph's placing the Seer Stone in the crown of a hat, then putting his face into the hat, so as to entirely cover his face, resting his elbows upon his knees, and then dictating, word after word, while the scribe—Emma, John Whitmer, O. Cowdery, or some other, wrote it down."[6]

The above agrees perfectly with David Whitmer's statements, and goes far to confirm Father Whitmer's testimony; but this is not all. In the *Saints' Herald* of October 1st, 1879, in an article headed "Last Testimony of Sister

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5. See D&C 10:1, published as Chapter 9 in the Book of Commandments minus the phrase "by means of the Urim and Thummim"; and D&C 17:1, which was not included in the Book of Commandments but first appeared as Section 42 in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants.

6. See V.C.3, MICHAEL MORSE INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM W. BLAIR, 8 MAY 1879.

Emma," on first page of the *Herald,* third column, near the bottom of the page, S[iste]r. Emma is represented as saying:

"In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us."[7]

This statement was made to President Joseph Smith, by his mother in February, 1879. The wife of Joseph Smith—who acted sometimes as his scribe, certainly is a competent witness, and her last testimony is entitled to respectful consideration, and she says Joseph translated by a stone placed in his hat.

Why did not Mrs. Bidamon not say that Joseph translated by aid of Urim and Thummim? The reason is obvious in the light of the facts, to which I have briefly alluded: because he translated with a stone, a Seer Stone; not two clear stones set in the rims of a bow. Thus we see that Mr. Morse and Mrs. Bidamon both agree that Joseph Smith used a stone and not Urim and Thummim, nor Interpreter either.

Will those who hold the Urim and Thummim story to be correct, still continue to give the lie to David Whitmer, Michael Morse and Mrs. Emma Bidamon? Or will they have the courage to admit that those who have held high positions have been guilty of gross fabrication?

With the sanction of David Whitmer, and by his authority, I now state that he does not say that Joseph Smith ever translated in his presence by aid of Urim and Thummim; but by means of one dark colored, opaque stone, called a "Seer Stone," which was placed in the crown of a hat, into which Joseph put his face, so as to exclude the external light. Then, a spiritual light would shine forth, and parchment would appear before Joseph, upon which was a line of characters from the plates, and under it, the translation in English; at least, so Joseph said.

In her last testimony Mrs. Emma Bidamon said to President Joseph Smith:

"David Whitmer I believe to be an honest and truthful man. I think what he states may be relied on."

So say all who know him. And as sure as he is truthful and honest, the Book of Mormon was translated by means of a Seer Stone. And if it was not, I say distinctly that David Whitmer, the only surviving witness to the Book of Mormon, is not truthful.

J. L. TRAUGHBER, JR.,

MANDEVILLE, Mo., Oct. 13, 1879.

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7. See I.F.3, EMMA SMITH BIDAMON INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH SMITH III, FEB 1879.

9.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH JOHN MURPHY, JUNE 1880

John Murphy to the Editor, undated, *Hamiltonian,* 21 January 1881; reprinted in the *Kingston* (Missouri) *Times,* 16 December 1887.

EDITORIAL NOTE

In June 1880, John Murphy of Polo, Missouri, interviewed David Whitmer concerning the Book of Mormon. Murphy's subsequent letter to the editor of the *Hamiltonian* (Hamilton, Missouri) emphasized the metaphysical aspects of Whitmer's visionary experience. The publication of Murphy's letter evoked a response from Whitmer in the form of a "Proclamation" (see VI.A.11, DAVID WHITMER PROCLAMATION, 19 MAR 1881). However, Whitmer disputed the implication that he had denied his testimony of the Book of Mormon and not any specific statement attributed to him. As the editor of the *Kingston Times* subsequently noted, "the studious reader will fail to see wherein Mr. Murphy alleges that Elder Whitmer denies being a witness" (April 1881, as cited in *Saints' Herald* 35 [21 January 1888]: 35). John Murphy is listed in the 1870 census of Fairview, Caldwell County, Missouri, as a thirty-five-year-old farmer (1870:101).

MR. EDITOR:—I have been sometime past waiting for an opportunity to report a conversation which took place between myself and Mr. David Whitmer, one of the surviving witnesses to the book of Mormon. I had hoped to have a talk with his brother John,[1] but death intervened. I had business in Richmond last June and thought I would interview Mr. Whitmer. I met him on the street near the court house, and told him my business, and he invited me to the livery stable conducted by him and son. After we were seated in the office room the following conversation took place.

"I [John] am an Irishman, and live in Caldwell county. I have seen the book of Mormon. I have seen your name, and your brother John's as testi-

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1. On John Whitmer (1802-78), see "Introduction to John Whitmer Collection."

monies to the book of Mormon. John is now dead, and you alone are left to satisfy my desire of knowledge concerning these things.["]

"It is warm here come down to the office of our livery stable." When seated he asked me for the points concerning which I wanted information.

"First of all, I heard you saw an angel. I never saw one. I want your description of [the] shape, voice, brogue and the construction of his language. I mean as to his style of speaking. You know that we can often determine the class a man belongs to by his language."

"It had no appearance or shape."

"Then you saw nothing nor heard nothing?"

"Nothing, in the way you understand it."

"How, then, could you have borne testimony that you saw and heard an angel?"

"Have you never had impressions?"

"Then you had impressions as the quaker when the spirit moves, or as a good Methodist in giving a happy experience, a feeling?"

"Just so."

"I think I understand you about the angel, but how about the reformed Egyptian writing on the plate[s], discovered by Mr. Smith in the cave in New York. How did you know that was Egyptian and that the book of Mormon is a correct translation—this book in England so much talked of?"

"Being impressed with the truth and reality of it."

"In the same way in which you were impressed with the presence of the angel?"

"Yes."

"Do you know any other language than English?"

"No."

"Do you know anything of mesmerism or ventriloquism? Is it not possible you were imposed upon? You look to be honest?"

"I do not know anything of those things."

"You have perhaps read the history of Egypt, how the Carthagenians were descendants of Phenecia and how the Israelites sojourned in Egypt and the probability of the old Egyptian being akin to the languages or idioms of Palestine, how the Persians ruled for a time in Egypt, how Alexander and the Greeks ruled afterward, the Romans next and last of all the Arabs. Now, all these languages are known to linguists in the great Universities of Europe and what need of a miracle to decifer [decipher] [them]. The hieroglyphics are more ancient and the way to read them is discovered; and I do not see the need of an angel's visit to teach us how to read them now days. You thought doubtless that you were impressed for good, but have you considered the precedents for murder taught in the first chapter of [the] book of Nephi [1

Ne. 4:7-29]. I stated the circumstances of Nephi being commanded by God to murder his uncle at night in the streets, outside the walls of his house in Jerusalem. When he said that that looked bad, with such a tone that I thought he had never before observed this wickedness in his book, [which was] witness[ed] and recommended by his angel and himself to the world. He had an honest simple look and my impression, which I think to be as good as his or his angel, is that he ought to reconsider and contradict his former testimony to a delusion or perhaps a cunning scheme being a fact which has resulted in so much woe to many, and as he seems to be nearly 80 years old, he ought not to delay.

JOHN MURPHY.

Polo, Mo.

10.
E. S. GILBERT TO ELLEN E. DICKINSON, 1 AUGUST 1880

E. S. Gilbert to Ellen E. Dickinson, 1 August 1880, in Ellen E. Dickinson, *New Light on Mormonism* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1885), 261-62.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On 1 August 1880, E. S. Gilbert of Canaseraga, New York, wrote to anti-Mormon writer Ellen E. Dickinson, relating the substance of an interview his aunt, a "Mrs. Orill Fuller," had with David Whitmer sometime prior to Joseph Smith's death in 1844. According to this third-hand account, Whitmer denied having seen the angel and plates in a vision. Considering the otherwise uniform record of Whitmer's testimony, this claim is extremely doubtful. E. S. Gilbert of Canaseraga, Allegany County, New York, is possibly Ezra Gilbert (age thirty-seven) listed in the 1880 census of Burns township, which included Canaseraga (1880:160).

CANASERAGA, N.Y., August 1, 1880.

MRS. ELLEN E. DICKINSON.

DEAR MADAM: Your interesting paper in *Scribner,* entitled "The Book of Mormon,"[1] has recalled the following anecdote to my mind, related by my aunt, Mrs. Orill Fuller,[2] who was converted to the Mormon faith in the first days, and emigrated from this State to join the Mormon congregation, located, I think, at Kirtland, Ohio.

It appears that a certificate or affidavit, signed by the three witnesses—David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery,[3] and Martin Harris[4]—was appended to the "Book of Mormon" to this effect: "We, the under[p.

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1. Ellen E. Dickinson, "The Book of Mormon," *Scribner's Monthly* 20 (August 1880): 613-16.

2. I have been unable to learn anything about Orill Fuller and his wife or their possible conversion to Mormonism.

3. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

4. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

261]signed, have *seen* and *hefted* the book of plates."[5] Arrived at her destination, my aunt became acquainted with David Whitmer, who lived there; and wishing to be edified by the account of a reliable eye-witness concerning the appearance and peculiarities of the wonderful plates, she took early opportunity to converse with him on the subject, when, to her amazement, the veracious Whitmer assured her that he never had seen them.

"Suppose," said he, "that you had a friend whose character was such that you knew it impossible that he could lie; then if he described a city to you which you had never seen, could you not, by the eye of faith, see the city just as he described it?" She answered that, however that might be, the certificate attached to the Mormon Bible had given rise to the belief that the three witnesses had actually seen and handled the book of plates.

Thereupon he went on to relate the bottom facts, which formed the basis of his faith, to this effect: That he went into the woods after some maple sap, and having filled two large pails, he set out to return home. The pails of sap were so heavy that he was obliged to stop and rest at short intervals, and the sharp roots and stubs hurt his bare feet so badly that he had great difficulty in getting along at all. So sitting alone in the woods, he fell to thinking of Smith and of the plates he claimed to have found, and finally, to ease his doubts, he knelt and prayed that if Joseph Smith was a true prophet, and the plates a genuine revelation from God, that the sap might be made lighter as a token thereof. The prayer being ended, he arose, and lifted the sap, which now had apparently no weight whatever, and he went the remaining distance—I think a half mile—without setting it down once, getting over the ground easier than if empty-handed. Whether Cowdery and Harris had such convincing proof, I do not know. I believe I read in the *Latter-Day Saints Herald,* that an angel appeared to them, holding the book of plates in his hands.[6] My aunt's family did not remain at Kirtland long; they seceded and went to Michigan, under the leadership of James G. Strong[7]; if I remember rightly, renounced Mormonism some time after, and are now living some-

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5. Gilbert mistakenly refers to the Testimony of Eight Witnesses, which states that "we have seen and hefted" the gold plates. The Testimony of Three Witnesses states that "an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon," but says nothing about handling the plates (see VI.G.1, TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES, JUN 1829).

6. See *Saints' Herald,* 15 April and 15 November 1879, 341 (cf. VI.A.8, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO *SAINTS' HERALD,* 13 OCT 1879).

7. James J. Strang, leader of a factional Mormon group, founded a colony on Beaver Island in Lake Michigan following Joseph Smith's death.

where in the West. David Whitmer is still living, though very aged. These details, perhaps unimportant in themselves, derive a possible significance in connection with Mrs. McKinstry's[8] narrative, showing how miracles and visions were, of necessity, substituted for ocular demonstration of the existence of the plates. You are at liberty to make any use of these statements that you choose, and I remain,

Yours truly,
E. S. GILBERT.

8. Mrs. McKinstry was Solomon Spaulding's daughter (Bush 1977, 50-51).

11.
DAVID WHITMER PROCLAMATION, 19 MARCH 1881

David Whitmer, Proclamation, 19 March 1881, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah. Published in "A Proclamation," *Richmond* (Missouri) *Conservator,* 24 March 1881; reprinted in the *Hamiltonian* (Hamilton, Missouri), 8 April 1881; *Saints' Herald* 28 (1 June 1881): 168; and David Whitmer, *Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, Missouri: D. Whitmer, 1887), 8-10; also published as a leaflet, "A Proclamation" (n.p., n.d.).

EDITORIAL NOTE

Whitmer's proclamation was written in response to John Murphy's version of his interview with Whitmer, published in the *Hamiltonian* in January 1881, wherein Whitmer allegedly said he had seen the plates only in a visionary state (see VI.A.9, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH JOHN MURPHY, JUN 1880). Whitmer formally reaffirmed his testimony of the Book of Mormon and appended the names of twenty-two people who could attest to his integrity. When published with his 1887 *Address to All Believers in Christ,* Whitmer gave the following introduction:

> It is recorded in the American Cyclopaedia and the Encyclopaedia Britannica, that I, David Whitmer, have denied my testimony as one of the three witnesses to the divinity of the Book of Mormon; and that the other two witnesses, Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris, denied their testimony to the Book. I will say once more to all mankind, that I have never at any time denied that testimony or any part thereof. I also testify to the world, that neither Oliver Cowdery or Martin Harris ever at any time denied their testimony. They both died reaffirming the truth of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. I was present at the death bed of Oliver Cowdery, and his last words were, *"Brother David, be true to your testimony to the Book of Mormon."* He died here in Richmond, Mo., on March 3rd, 1850. Many witnesses [are] yet alive in Richmond, who will testify to the truth of these facts, as well as to the good character of Oliver Cowdery. The very powers of darkness have combined against the Book of Mormon, to prove that it is not the word of God, and this should go to prove to men of spiritual understanding, that the Book is true. To show the reader what I have had to contend with, I give you below a copy of a leaflet which I had printed and distributed in March, 1881 (Whitmer 1887, 8).

By April 1884, Whitmer had handed out all but a few of his leaflets. The original handwritten document in the LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah (see photographs in the *Improvement Era,* April 1969, 79; and Richardson 1952, 178-80), was sold to the church for $25.00 by George W. Crowley of Richmond, Missouri, in 1938 (see George W. Crowley to Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., 8 August 1938, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah). A transcription of the original follows.

Unto all Nations, Kindreds, tongues and people unto whom this present Shall come.

It having been represented by one John Murphy of Polo Mo. that I in a conversation with him last Summer, denied my testimony as one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon.

To the end therefore, that he may understand me now if he did not then, and that the world may know the truth, I wish now standing as it were, in the very sunset of life, and in the fear of God, once for all to make this public Statement;

That I have never at any time, denied that testimony or any part thereof, which has so long since been published with that book as one of the three witnesses.

Those who know me best, well know that I have adhered to that testimony.—

And that no man may be misled or doubt my present views in regard to the same, I do now again affirm the truth of all my statement[s], as then made and published.

He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear; It was no Delusion. What is written is written, and he that readeth let him understand.

And that no one may be deceived or misled by this Statement, I wish here to state that I do not indorse Polygamy or Spiritual wifeism. It is a great Evil, Shocking to the moral Sense; and the more so because practiced in the name of religion.

It is of man not of God, and is Especially forbidden in the Book of Mormon itself [cf. Jacob 2]. I do not indorse the change of the name of the Church, for as the wife takes the name of her husband, [p. 1] So Should the Church of the Lamb of God take the name of its head; Even Christ himself. It is the Church of Christ. As to the High priesthood; Jesus Christ himself is the last Great High priest: This too after the order of Melchisadec, as I understand the Holy Scriptures [Heb. 7].

Finally; I do not indorse any of the teachings of the so called Mormons or Latter day Saints, which are in conflict with the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as taught in the Bible and Book of Mormon. For the

same Gospel is plainly taught in both of these books as I understand the word of God. And if any man doubt should he not carefully and honestly read and understand the same, before presuming, to sit in Judgment, and condemning the Light which Shineth in darkness, and Showeth the way of Eternal life, as pointed out by the unerring hand of God.

In the Spirit of Christ who hath said follow thou me, for I am the Life the light and the way, I submit this Statement to the world. God in whom I trust being my Judge, as to the sincerity of my motives and the faith and hope that is in me of Eternal life[.]

My sincere Desire is that the world may be benefited by this plain and simple Statement of the truth.

And all the Honor be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost which is one God. Amen

[s] David Whitmer Sr.
Richmond Mo March 19th AD 1881 [p. 2]

We the undersigned citizens of Richmond Ray Co Mo where David Whitmer Sr has resided since the year AD 1838, Certify that we have been long and intimately acquainted with him, and know him to be a man of the highest integrity, and of undoubted truth and veracity. Given at Richmond Mo this March 19th AD 1881

A. W. Doniphan[1]
Geo W. Dunn, Judge of the Fifth Judicial circuit.
T D Woodson President Ray County Savings Bank
Jacob T. Child, Editor of Conservator.
H C Garner Cashier Ray County Sav[ings] Bank
W. A. Holman, County Treasurer
J. S. Hughes Banker Richmond Mo.
James Hughes [Banker Richmond Mo.]
D. P. Whitmer Attorney at Law.
James W Black, Attorney at Law.
L C Cantwell, Postmaster Richmond Mo.
Geo I. Wasson, Mayor
Jas A Davis, Revenue collector
C J. Hughes Probate Judge & P[residing]. J[ustice]. Ray County Court.

1. Alexander W. Doniphan (1808-87) was hired by the Mormons as legal counsel in Missouri in 1833 and later, as commander in the state militia, refused to follow orders to execute Mormon leaders.

Geo W. Trigg County Clerk Ray County
W W Mosby, MD
Thos McGinnis Late Sheriff Ray Co
W R. Holman Furniture Merchant
J P Quessenberry Merchant
Lewis Slaughter, Recorder of Deeds
G. W. Buchanan, M.D.
A. K. Rayburn [p. 3]

12.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL*, 1 JUNE 1881

"Mormonism. Authentic Account of the Origin of This Sect from One of the Patriarchs. Discovery of the Plates, and the Translation of the Book of Mormon—Polygamy an Excres[c]ence," *Kansas City Daily Journal,* 5 June 1881; reprinted in the *Deseret Evening News* 14 (11 June 1881); *Saints' Herald* 28 (1 July 1881): 197-99; *Millennial Star* 43 (4 July 1881): 421-23, 437-39; and *Kingston* (Missouri) *Times,* 27 December 1887.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On 5 June 1881, the *Kansas City Journal* published a lengthy interview with David Whitmer which, according to the report, was conducted four days earlier. Whitmer wrote a letter to the paper, dated 13 June 1881, in which he identified several errors in the article (see VI.A.13, DAVID WHITMER TO *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 13 JUN 1881). In a letter to S. T. Mouch, dated 18 November 1887, he complained about the interview: "As to the interview published in the Kansas City Journal of June 5th 1881 there were So many Errors in it as published that I felt compelled to correct what I thought to be the most damaging Errors—these corrections were published in the same paper Date June 19th 1881[,] and Even in publishing the Statement Correcting their former publication where I had written 'Seers Stone' they made it read 'Sun Stone[.]' I think the interview as published in the Said paper of Date June 5th 1881 & corrected in Same paper of Date June 19th by me and modified is Substantially Correct. Making the corrections read Seer Stone not Sun Stone as they have it—But the two must be read and put together in order to be properly understood. And I hope that all who May read it or Speak of the matter will do me the kindness to read the same together in the Spirit of truth and Justice" (Whitmer Collection, RLDS Church [now Community of Christ] Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri).

... David Whitmer,

THE ONLY LIVING WITNESS,

has resided since 1838 in Richmond, Ray county, Mo., and the JOURNAL

dispatched a reporter to Richmond, to interview the "last of the eleven [witnesses]."

The reporter called at the residence of Mr. Whitmer and found the patriarch resting in an invalid's chair looking very pale and feeble, he having but just recovered from a long and very severe illness. In person, he is about medium height, of massive frame, though not at all corpulent, his shoulders slightly bent as with the weight of years. His manly, benevolent face was closely shaven, his hair snow white, and his whole appearance denoted one of nature's noblemen. The education acquired during his boyhood days and his long life devoted to study and thought, have stored his mind with a vast fund of information.

After introducing himself, the reporter opened the conversation as follows:

"Mr. Whitmer, knowing that you are the only living witness to the translation of the Book of Mormon and also that you were a resident of Jackson county during the Mormon troubles in 1833, I have been sent to you by the JOURNAL to get from your lips

THE TRUE STATEMENT OF FACTS

in regard to these matters. For nearly half a century the world has had but one side only, and it is now our desire to present to our readers for the first time the other side."

"Young man, you are right. I am the only living witness to the Book of Mormon, but I have been imposed upon and misrepresented so many times by persons claiming to be honorable newspaper men, that I feel a delicacy in allowing my name to come before the public in newspaper print again."

"I am sorry to hear that, but I promise you that we shall only give your statement as you make it, and will not misrepresent you in any manner."

After a few other remarks of the same tenor the reporter at last induced the patriarch to furnish the desired facts, which he did in the following language:

BIOGRAPHICAL.

"I was born near Harrisburg, Pa., January 7, 1805, but when only four years of age[1] my parents removed to the state of New York, settling at a point midway between the northern extremities of Lakes Cayuga and Seneca, two miles from Waterloo, seven miles from Geneva, and twenty-seven miles

1. Peter Whitmer, Sr.'s, appearance in the 1810 census at Fayette, New York, supports David Whitmer's memory on the time of his family's arrival (see R. L. Anderson 1981, 124).

from Palmyra, where I lived until the year 1831. In the year 1830 I was married to Miss Julia A. Jolly[2] who is still living. The fruit of our union was a son David J. Whitmer, now aged 48, and a daughter, now Mrs. Julia Schweich, now aged 46 years, both of whom are now living with me. I first heard of what is now termed Mormonism in the year 1828. I made a business trip to Palmyra, N.Y., and while there stopped with one Oliver Cowdery.[3] A great many people in the neighborhood were talking about the finding of certain golden plates by one Joseph Smith, jr., a young man of that neighborhood. Cowdery and I, as well as others, talked about the matter, but at that time I paid but little attention to it, supposing it to be only

THE IDLE GOSSIP

of the neighborhood. Cowdery said he was acquainted with the Smith family, and he believed there must be some truth in the story of the plates, and that he intended to investigate the matter. I had conversations with several young men who said that Joseph Smith had certainly golden plates, and that before he attained them he had promised to share with them, but had not done so, and they were very much incensed with him.[4] Said I, 'how do you know that Joe Smith has the plates?' They replied: 'we saw the plates[5] in the hill that he took them out of just as he described it to us before he obtained them.'[6] These parties were so positive in their statements that I began to believe there must be some foundation for the stories then in circulation all

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2. On Julia Ann Jolly (1815-89), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 118.

3. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

4. See also VI.A.17, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEWS WITH JAMES HART, 21 AUG 1883 & 18 MAR 1884. A similar statement was made by Martin Harris in III.F.10, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEW WITH JOEL TIFFANY, 1859, 167.

5. Whitmer corrected "plates" to "place" (see VI.A.13, DAVID WHITMER TO *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 13 JUN 1881; cf. VI.A.17, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEWS WITH JAMES HART, 21 AUG 1883 & 18 MAR 1884).

6. See also VI.A.6, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH P. WILHELM POULSON, CIRCA APR 1878; and VI.A.14, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* 14 OCT 1881. However, Lorenzo Saunders stated that he could not find the place when he searched the hill only days after Smith said he took the plates from the hill (III.B.15, LORENZO SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, 12 NOV 1884, 16-17). It is possible that Whitmer's informants had seen the excavation on the northeast side of the hill that Saunders said was dug by treasure seekers a year or two earlier.

over that part of the country. I had never seen any of the Smith family up to that time, and I began to inquire of the people in regard to them, and learned that one night during the year 1827[7] Joseph Smith, jr., had a vision, and an angel of God appeared to him and told him where certain plates were to be found, and pointed out the spot to him, and that shortly afterward he went to that place and found the plates which were still in his [the angle's] possession. After thinking over the matter for a long time, and talking with Cowdery, who also gave me a history of the finding of the plates, I went home, and after several months Cowdery told me he was going to Harmony, Pa.—whither Joseph Smith had gone with the plates on account of persecutions of his neighbors—and see him about the matter. He did go and on his way stopped at my father's house[8] and told me that as soon as he found out anything either

he would let me know. After he got there he became acquainted with Joseph Smith, and shortly after, wrote to me telling me that he was convinced that Smith had the records and that he (Smith) had told him that it was the will of heaven that he (Cowdery) should be his scribe to assist in the translation of the plates. He went on and Joseph translated from the plates and he wrote it down. Shortly after this Cowdery wrote me another letter in which he gave me a few lines of what they had translated, and he assured me that he knew of a certainty that he had a record of a people that inhabited this continent, and that the plates they were translating gave a complete history of these people. When Cowdery wrote me these things and told me that he had revealed knowledge concerning the truth of them, I showed these letters to my parents, and brothers and sisters. Soon after I received another letter from Cowdery, telling me to come down into Pennsylvania and bring him and Joseph to my father's house, giving as a reason therefor that they had received a commandment from God to that effect. I went down to Harmony, and found everything just as they had written me. The next day after I got there they packed up the plates[9] and we proceeded on our journey to my father's

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7. The reporter apparently conflated the angel's first appearance in 1823 with when Smith said he obtained the plates, 1827.

8. Cowdery, together with Samuel Smith, stopped at the Whitmer home in Fayette, New York, in early April 1829 on their way to Harmony, Pennsylvania, where they arrived on 5 April.

9. Whitmer later denied having said "they packed up the plates," only that "they packed up the next day" (VI.A.13, DAVID WHITMER TO *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 13 JUN 1881). On other occasions Whitmer claimed that the angel had transported the plates from Harmony to Fayette (e.g., VI.A.5, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEWS WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 22-23 DEC 1877).

house where we arrived in due time, and the day after[,] we[10] commenced upon the translation of the remainder of the plates. I, as well as all of my father's family, Smith's wife,[11] Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris[12] were present during the translation. The translation was by Smith and

THE MANNER AS FOLLOWS:

"He had two small stones[13] of a chocolate color, nearly egg shaped and perfectly smooth, but not transparent, called interpreters,[14] which were given him with the plates. He did not use the plates in the translation, but would hold the interpreters to his eyes and cover his face with a hat, excluding all light, and before his eyes would appear what seemed to be parchment, on which would appear the characters of the plates in a line at the top, and immediately below would appear the translation in English, which Smith would read to his scribe, who wrote it down exactly as it fell from his lips. The scribe would then read the sentence written, and if any mistake had been made the characters would remain visible to Smith until corrected, when they faded from sight to be replaced by another line. The translation at my father's occupied about one month, that is from June 1 to July 1, 1829."

"Were the plates under the immediate control of Smith all the time?"

"No, they were not. I will explain how that was. When Joseph first received the plates he translated 116 pages of the book of 'Lehi,' with Martin Harris as scribe.[15] When this had been completed they rested for a time, and Harris wanted to take the manuscript home with him to show to his family and friends. To this Joseph demurred, but finally

ASKED THE LORD

if Harris might be allowed to take it. The answer was 'no.' Harris teased Joseph for a long time and finally persuaded him to ask the Lord a second time, pledging himself to be responsible for its safe keeping. To this second inquiry the Lord told Joseph [regarding] Harris [that] he might take the manuscript,

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10. Whitmer later corrected this "we" to "he" (Smith) (VI.A.13, DAVID WHITMER TO *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 13 JUN 1881).

11. On Emma Hale Smith (1804-79), see "Introduction to Emma Smith Collection."

12. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

13. Whitmer later corrected "two small stones" to "one stone" (VI.A.13, DAVID WHITMER TO *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 13 JUN 1881).

14. Whitmer later corrected "interpreters" to "seer stone" (VI.A.13, DAVID WHITMER TO *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 13 JUN 1881).

15. See III.L.16, BOOK OF MORMON PREFACE, 1829.

which he did, showing it to a great many people, but through some carelessness allowed it to be stolen from him. This incurred the Lord's displeasure, and he sent an angel to Joseph demanding the plates, and until Joseph had thoroughly repented of his transgressions would not allow him to have the use of them again. When Joseph was again allowed to resume the translation[,] the plates were taken care of by a messenger of God, and when Joseph wanted to see the plates this messenger was always at hand. The 116 pages of the book of 'Lehi' which were stolen were never recovered nor would the Lord permit Joseph to make a second translation of it.

"A few months after the translation was completed, that is, in the spring of 1830,[16] Joseph had the book published and this (showing a well worn volume) is a copy of the first edition which I have had in my possession ever since it was printed."

"When did you see the plates?"

"It was in the latter part of June, 1829. Joseph, Oliver Cowdery and myself were together, and the angel showed them to us. We not only saw the plates of the book of Mormon, but he also showed us the brass plates of the book of Ether and many others. They were shown to us in this way. Joseph and Oliver and I were

SITTING ON A LOG

when we were overshadowed by a light more glorious than that of the sun. In the midst of this light but a few feet from us appeared a table upon which were many golden plates, also the sword of Laban and the directors. I saw them as plain as I see you now, and distinctly heard the voice of the Lord declaiming that the records of the plates of the Book of Mormon were translated by the gift and the power of God."

"Who else saw the plates at this time?"

"No one. Martin Harris, the other witness, saw them the same day and the eight witnesses, Christian Whitmer, Hiram Page, Jacob Whitmer, Joseph Smith, sr., Peter Whitmer, jr., Hyram Smith, Jno. [John] Whitmer and Samuel H. Smith saw them next day."[17]

"Did you see the angel?"

"Yes; he stood before us. Our testimony as recorded in the Book of Mormon is absolutely true, just as it is written there."

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16. The first copies of the Book of Mormon were ready for sale in March 1830.

17. Cf. VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, where Whitmer says the experience of the eight witnesses occurred one or two days later.

"Can you describe the plates?"

"They appeared to be of gold, about six by nine inches in size, about as thick as parchment, a great many in number and bound together like the leaves of a book by massive rings passing through the back edges. The engraving upon them was very plain and of very curious appearance. Smith made facsimiles of some of the plates, and sent them by Martin Harris to Profs. Anson [Charles Anthon][18] and [Samuel L.] Mitchell,[19] of New York city, for examination. They pronounced the characters reformed Egyptian, but were unable to read them."[20]

"Did Joseph Smith ever relate to you the circumstances of his

FINDING THE PLATES?"

"Yes; he told me that he first found the plates in the early spring of 1828[21]; that during the fall of 1827 he had a vision, an angel appearing to him three times in one night and telling him that there was a record of an ancient people deposited in a hill near his fathers house, called by the ancients 'Cumorah,' situated in the township of Manchester, Ontario county[,] N.Y. The angel pointed out the exact spot and some time after he went and found the records or plates deposited in a stone box in the hill just as had been described to him by the angel. It was some little time, however, before the angel would allow Smith to remove the plates from their place of deposit."

"When was the church first established?"

"We had [been] preaching during the time the book was being translated but our church was not regularly organized until after the book was printed in the winter of 1829-'30.[22] The first organization was in Seneca county, New York,[23] under the name of "The Church of Christ." The first elders were Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, Hyram Smith,[24]

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18. On Charles Anthon (1797-1867), see introduction to V.D.1, CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834.

19. On Samuel L. Mitchell (1764-1831), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 45.

20. Concerning Anthon's inability to read the characters, see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

21. The obviously incorrect dates of "spring of 1828" and "fall of 1827" were not corrected by Whitmer; however, Joseph Smith said he saw the angel and found the plates on 21/22 September 1823.

22. The printing commenced in August 1829; finished books were first issued in March 1830.

23. On the location of the church's organization, see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 82.

24. On Hyrum Smith (1800-44), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 12.

Jno. [John] Whitmer,[25] Peter Whitmer[26] and myself. On the 6th of April, 1830, the church was called together and the elders acknowledged according to the laws of New York.[27] Our instructions from the Lord were to teach nothing except the old and new testaments and the Book of Mormon. From that time the church spread abroad and multiplied very rapidly. In the summer of 1830 Parley Pratt,[28] Peter Whitmer [Jr.] and S. [Ziba] Peterson[29] went to Kirtland, O[hio]., and established a branch of the church which also grew very fast and soon after a fine temple was erected, which is still standing. ...[30]

"I understand, Mr. Whitmer, that you have the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon."

"I have; here it is." (He produced about 500 pages of manuscript, yellow with age, of large, old fashioned, unruled foolscap paper, closely written upon both sides with ink and fastened together in sections with yarn strings. It very plainly showed that it had been through the hands of the printer, the 'take' marks being still upon it.) "This," continued he, "was kept by Oliver Cowdery, and when he came to die he placed them in my care, charging me to preserve them so long as I lived. When I die I will leave them to my nephew, David Whitmer, my namesake. J[oseph]. F. Smith and Orson Pratt, of Salt Lake City, were here three years ago and offered me a fabulous price for them, but I would not part with them for all the money in the universe."

"Are you not afraid they will be destroyed or stolen?"

"No, the Lord will take care of his own. When this house was destroyed by the cyclone three years ago to-day (June 1st, 1878), nothing in the room where this manuscript was kept was harmed. Everything else was completely destroyed.["]

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25. On John Whitmer (1802-78), see "Introduction to John Whitmer Collection."

26. On Peter Whitmer, Jr. (1809-36), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 63.

27. Whitmer's list of seven elders is in error since some of these men were not ordained until a later date. He evidently confused the church's organization with the first conference held on 9 June 1830 at Fayette (see introduction to IV.A.4, JOSEPH KNIGHT, JR., STATEMENT, 11 AUG 1862).

28. On Parley Parker Pratt (1807-57), see introduction to III.K.16, PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY (PART I), CIRCA 1854.

29. On Richard Ziba Peterson (?-1849), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 105.

30. For Whitmer's account of events in Missouri, see Cook 1991, 65-69.

Both Mr. Whitmer and his family are thoroughly imbued with the idea that the manuscript is under the immediate protection of the Almighty. ...[31]

This ended the interview and after bidding the old man adieu and thanking him for his kindness the writer took his leave. ...

31. At this point, the *Journal* printed the attachment to Whitmer's "Proclamation" certifying to his character (see VI.A.11, DAVID WHITMER PROCLAMATION, 19 MAR 1881; Cook 1991, 70-71).

13.
DAVID WHITMER TO *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL* 13 JUNE 1881

David Whitmer to the Editor, 13 June 1881, "A Few Corrections," *Kansas City Daily Journal,* 19 June 1881.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On 13 June 1881, David Whitmer wrote a letter to the *Kansas City Journal* correcting errors in his interview published in the paper a little more than a week earlier (see VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881). The editor's note that follows Whitmer's letter, states: "It is but justice to the reporter who interviewed Mr. Whitmer to say that the errors above referred to were purely accidental and entirely unintentional as it was his aim and desire as well as that of the JOURNAL to publish Mr. Whitmer's statement just as he made it."

To the Editor of the Journal.

RICHMOND, MO., June 13.—I notice several errors in the interview had with me by one of your reporters as published in the DAILY JOURNAL of June 5th, '81, and wish to correct them.

I am reported as saying that "the young men in the neighborhood saw the plates in the hill." The language used was, that "we saw the place (not the plates) in the hill from which the plates were taken, just as he described them to us before he obtained them." In regard to my going to Harmony, my statement was that "I found everything as Cowdery had written me, and that they packed up next day and went to my father's, (did not say 'packed up the plates') and that he, Smith, (not 'we') then commenced the translation of the remainder of the plates." I did not wish to be understood as saying that those referred to as being present were all of the time in the immediate presence of the translator, but were at the place and saw how the translation was conducted. I did not say that Smith used "two small stones" as stated nor did I call the stone "interpreters." I stated that "he used one stone (not two) and called

it a sun stone."[1] The "interpreters" were as I understood taken from Smith and were not used by him after losing the first 116 pages as stated. It is my understanding that the stone refer[r]ed to was furnished him when he commenced translating again after losing the 116 pages.

My statement was and now is that in translating he put the stone in his hat and [that this was accomplished by] putting his face in his hat so as to exclude the light and that then the light and characters appeared in the hat together with the interpretation which he uttered and [which] was written by the scribe and which was tested at the time as stated.

... I stated that "we had preaching during the time the Book of Mormon was being printed," not while the same was being translated, as reported.

I stated that "in the summer of 1830 Oliver Cowdery, Parley Pratt, Peter Whitmer and S. [Ziba] Peterson went to Kirtland, O[hio]., and established a church." In the interview, as reported, the name of Cowdery is omitted. ... I made no statement as to who should succeed me in charge of the ancient manuscript referred to; and as to what was done and said by Joseph Smith after leaving Caldwell county in 1838, I did not give as of my knowledge, but from [second-hand] information. I have carefully read the report and think the same is substantially correct except as herein explained and corrected.

DAVID WHITMER.

1. In a letter to S. T. Mouch, dated 18 November 1882, Whitmer complained that "even in publishing the Statement Correcting their former publication where I had written 'Seers Stone' they made it read 'Sun Stone'" (RLDS Church [now Community of Christ] Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri).

14.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES*, 14 OCTOBER 1881

"The Last Man. Of the Men Who Attested to the Truth of the 'Book of Mormon,' David Whitmer Only Is Left. In the Sunset of Life He Bases His Hopes of Heaven on the Records of the Lost Tribe. And Solemnly Reiterates All that He Has Ever Said Regarding Them," *Chicago Times,* 17 October 1881; reprinted in the *Saints' Herald* 28 (15 November 1881): 346-47.

EDITORIAL NOTE

The present interview was conducted at Whitmer's home in Richmond, Missouri, on 14 October 1881, and published three days later in the *Chicago Times.* Whitmer once commented that the interview contained "only two trifling errors" (VI.A.30, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH M. J. HUBBLE, NOV 1886).

In the beautiful shire town of Richmond, Ray county, Mo., there has resided for well nigh a half of a century David Whitmer, known to the world as one of the three witnesses that testified to the validity and reality of the golden plates from which it has been asserted that Joseph Smith translated the "Book of Mormon," the original manuscript of which Mr. Whitmer has in his possession, which shown by finger-marks and where it has been cut into "takes"—a printer's term—that it has passed through the hands of the type-setters. As a citizen of this town he stands deservedly high, having filled the office of mayor and councilman,[1] is a good scholar, and thoroughly posted in biblical lore. During the past two years he has been slowly declining, and is now confined to his home, carefully attended to by his wife, children, and grandchildren. Born in the state of New York, from Revolutionary ancestors, he brought with him to the west his habits of thrift and hospitality. To the stranger or the unfortunate his home and purse have ever been open, and his name is a synonym of probity and integrity. Knowing that he was approaching the full term allotted for men's stay on earth, and that the readers of THE TIMES would like to hear what he had to say concerning the

1. On Whitmer's political activities, see R. L. Anderson 1981, 72.

origin of the "Book of Mormon," I called at his residence—a plain and unpretentious frame building,—was ushered into his chamber by his granddaughter, and found the old patriot reclining on his bed. Upon being told the object of my visit he promptly responded to my questions, and after an hour's interview I gleaned the following valuable information from him—he speaking freely and unreservedly—in regard to the origin and rise of the Mormon church, as well as the authenticity of the "Book of Mormon."

THE PLATES

from which the book was translated, supposed to be gold, were found in the latter part of the year 1827 or 1828,[2] prior to any acquaintance on Mr. Whitmer's part with Joseph Smith, and he was loth [loathe] to believe in their actuality, notwithstanding the community in which he lived (Ontario county, New York,) was alive with excitement in regard to Smith's finding a great treasure, and they informed him that they knew that Smith had the plates, as they had seen the place that he had taken them from, on the hill Cumorah, about two miles from Palmyra, N.Y.[3] It was not until June, 1829, that he met the future prophet, who visited his father's house, and while there completed the translation of the "Book of Mormon," and thus he became conversant with its history, having witnessed Smith dictate to Oliver Cowdrey[4] the translation of the characters that were inscribed on the plates, said by Mr. [Charles] Anthon,[5] our Egyptian scholar, to resemble the characters of that ancient people. Christian Whitmer,[6] his brother, occasionally assisted Cowdrey in writing,[7] as did Mrs. Joseph Smith, who was a Miss [Emma] Hale[8] before she was married.

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2. The plates were said to have been taken from the hill on 22 September 1827.

3. See VI.A.3, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* AUG 1875, n. 18.

4. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

5. On Charles Anthon (1797-1867), see introduction to V.D.1, CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834.

6. On Christian Whitmer (1798-1835), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 96.

7. Concerning Christian Whitmer as a scribe, see VI.A.17, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEWS WITH JAMES H. HART, 21 AUG 1883 & 10 MAR 1884; VI.A.18, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE Q. CANNON, 27 FEB 1884; and VI.A.26, DAVID WHITMER WITH *CHICAGO TRIBUNE,* 17 DEC 1885.

8. On Emma Hale Smith (1804-79), see "Introduction to Emma Smith Collection."

In regard to finding the plates, he was told by Smith that they were in a stone casket, and the place where it was deposited, in the hill Cumorah, was pointed out to him by a celestial personage, clad in a dazzling white robe, and he was informed by it that it was the history of the Nephites, a nation that had passed away, whose founders belonged to the days of the tower of Babel. The plates which Mr. Whitmer saw were in the shape of a tablet, fastened with three rings, about one-third of which appeared to be loose, in plates, the other solid, but with perceptible marks where the plates seemed to be sealed, and the guide that pointed it out to Smith very impressively reminded him that the loose plates alone were to be used; the sealed portion was

NOT TO BE TAMPERED WITH.

After the plates had been translated, which process required about six months, the same heavenly visitant appeared and reclaimed the gold tablets of the ancient people, informing Smith that he would replace them with other records of the lost tribes that had been brought with them during their wanderings from Asia, which would be forthcoming when the world was ready to receive them. At that time Mr. Whitmer saw the tablet, gazed with awe on the celestial messenger, heard him speak and say: "Blessed is the Lord and he that keeps His commandments;" and then, as he held the plates and turned them over with his hands, so that they could be plainly visible, a voice that seemed to fill all space, musical as the sighing of a wind through the forest, was heard, saying: "What you see is true: testify to the same." And Oliver Cowdrey and David Whitmer, standing there, felt, as the white garments of the angel faded from their vision and the heavenly voice still rang in their ears, that it was no delusion—that it was a fact; and they so recorded it. In a day or two after[9] the same spirit appeared to Martin Harris[10] while he was in company with Smith, and told him also to bear witness to its truth, which he did, as can be seen in the book. Harris described the visitant to Whitmer, who recognized it as the same that he and Cowdrey had seen.

The tablets or plates were translated by Smith, who used a small oval or kidney-shaped stone, called Urim and Thummim,[11] that seemed endowed

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9. This is obviously an error since all other accounts (e.g., VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881) indicate that Harris saw the plates on the same day as Whitmer and Cowdery.

10. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

11. Concerning the use of the terms "Urim and Thummim" for the "seer stone," see VI.A.8, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO *SAINTS' HERALD,* 13 OCT 1879.

with the marvelous power of converting the characters on the plates, when used by Smith, into English, who would then dictate to Cowdrey what to write. Frequently one character would make two lines of manuscript, while others made but a word or two words. Mr. Whitmer emphatically asserts, as did Harris and Cowdrey, that while Smith was dictating the translation he had

NO MANUSCRIPT NOTES OR OTHER MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE

save the seer-stone and the characters as shown on the plates, he being present and cognizant how it was done.

In regard to the statement that Sidney Rigden[12] had purloined the work of one Spaulding, a Presbyterian preacher, who had written a romance entitled "The Manuscript Found." Mr. Whitmer says there is no foundation for such an assertion. The "Book of Mormon" was translated in the summer of 1829, and printed that winter at Palmyra, N.Y., and was in circulation before Sidney Rigden knew anything concerning the Church of Christ, as it was known then. His attention was specially brought to it by the appearance at his church, near Kirtland, O[hio]., in the fall of 1830, of Parley Pratt and Oliver Cowdrey, he being at that time a Reformed or Christian preacher, they having been sent west by the church in New York during that summer as evangelists, and they carried with them the printed book, the first time that he knew such a thing was in existence. Upon being appealed to by Pratt and Cowdrey for the use of the church, he informed them that as he was endeavoring to establish the rules and get back into the ancient usages of Christianity, and desired all the light that he could get that was of benefit to his fellow-men, he would do so, and would like to hear them. Then they gave him a copy of the book that it has been asserted he was the progenitor of. The result of that meeting was that 101 persons were received into the church at Kirtland; that Rigden and Partridge,[13] two influential preachers, were sent as delegates to New York to see Joseph Smith, and they were so much impressed with his history of the book and his connection therewith that they became firm believers, and started back home as evangelists, preaching the new religion. In a short time thereafter, Smith, Whitmer, and others learned of the beautiful country in Ohio, moved west, and the church increased rapidly, and would have so continued had it not strayed from the true path, to preach only Christ and Him crucified, as it had begun. Mr. Whitmer em-

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12. On Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), see introduction to I.A.13, SIDNEY RIGDON ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1836.

13. On Edward Partridge (1793-1840), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 193.

phatically asserts that he has heard Rigden, in the pulpit and in private conversations, declare that the Spaulding story, that he had used a book called "The Manuscript Found" for the purpose of preparing the "Book of Mormon," was as false as were many other charges that were then being made against the infant church, and he assures me that the story is as

UNTRUTHFUL AS IT IS RIDICULOUS.[14]

In his youth Joseph Smith was quite illiterate, knew nothing of grammar or composition, but obtained quite a good education after he came west; was a man of great magnetism, made friends easily, was liberal and noble in his impulses, tall, finely, formed, and full of animal life, but sprung from the most humble circumstances. The first good suit of clothes he had ever worn was presented to him by Christian Whitmer, brother of David.

As an evidence of their belief in the divine origin of the book, Martin Harris, one of the witnesses, mortgaged his farm for $1,500 for the purpose of having it printed, and the sale of the book soon reimbursed him for the outlay. Now millions of copies are being published and sent to the furthermost ends of the earth. A few years since, I was present at an interview between Mr. Whitmer and Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith,[15] who had been sent from Utah to Richmond to secure the original manuscript, and after a careful examination Elder Pratt pronounced it the writing of Oliver Cowdrey, and informed those present that it was the original manuscript from which the "Book of Mormon" had been printed, and in a conversation with the writer he assured me that the archives of the church at Salt Lake were incomplete without it; that they would pay Father Whitmer, as he termed him, any reasonable price for it, but that Whitmer would not part with it under any circumstances, regarding it as a sacred trust. Mr. Whitmer also has a number of other records of the early church, ere it had, as he says, "broke loose from the teachings of Christ[,] and [he] acknowledge[s] nothing as divine save as it was taught from the bible and the 'Book of Mormon.'"

Mr. Whitmer's beliefs have

UNDERGONE NO CHANGE

since his early manhood; he has refused to affiliate with any of the various branches that have sprung up through false teachings, and rests his hopes of the future "in the teachings of Christ, the apostles, and the prophets, and the morals and principles inculcated in the scriptures; that the 'Book of Mor-

14. On the Spaulding theory of Book of Mormon origins, see Bush 1977.

15. See VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878.

mon' is but the testimony of another nation concerning the truth and divinity of Christ and the bible, and that is his rock, his gospel, and his salvation." Seeing, with him, is believing. He is now as firm in the faith of the divinity of the book that he saw translated as he was when the glory of the celestial visitant almost blinded him with the gleam of its glowing presence, fresh from the godhead; and the voice, majestic, ringing out from earth to the mighty dome of space, still lingers in his ears like a chime of silver bells. ...[16]

16. David Whitmer's Proclamation is deleted here (see VI.A.11, DAVID WHITMER PROCLAMATION, 19 MAR 1881; see Cook 1991, 79-80).

15.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM H. KELLEY AND GEORGE A. BLAKESLEE, 15 DECEMBER 1881

William H. Kelley to the Editor, 16 January 1882, *Saints' Herald* 29 (1 March 1882): 68-69; reprinted in the *Journal of History* 3 (October 1910): 450-52.

EDITORIAL NOTE

David Whitmer was interviewed on 15 December 1881 by RLDS apostle William H. Kelley[1] and George A. Blakeslee,[2] a high priest from Galien, Michigan (see B. H. Roberts 1930, 1:131; Braden and Kelley 1884, 186). Lyndon W. Cook dates this interview to the day before Kelley wrote to the *Saints' Herald* (Cook 1991, 84). However, according to Kelley, the interview occurred on "Thursday the 15th," which rules out 15 January 1882, a Sunday. Kelley also states that Whitmer was "upwards of seventy-six years of age." If correct, there were only two months during Whitmer's seventy-sixth year that Thursday fell on the 15th: September and December. Kelley's mention of "last Summer" would tend to rule out September, leaving 15 December 1881 as the probable date of the interview.

... Early in the morning, Thursday the 15th [December 1881], we left Lexington [Lafayette County, Missouri] in the stage coach, crossed the Missouri River, and was landed at the railroad depot, a mile or more from the city. ... We were soon on the way to Richmond, Ray county, to visit David Whitmer, one of the witnesses. Arrived about 8:30 a.m., and breakfasted at the hotel. Here we met David Whitmer, Junior,[3] eldest son of David

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1. On William H. Kelley (1841-1915), see "Introduction to William H. and Edmund L. Kelley Collection."

2. George A. Blakeslee (1826-90) was born at Ellisburg, Jefferson County, New York. He married Lydia Alcott in 1848, joined the RLDS Church in 1859, and became the Presiding Bishop in April 1882. In about 1854 he moved to Galien County, Michigan, where he resided until his death (Knisley 1948, under "Blakeslee, George A.").

3. On David J. Whitmer, see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 5.

Whitmer, Senior. He looks to be about forty-five years of age. Is kind hearted and is a firm believer in the Book of Mormon and in the testimony borne by his father concerning it. After breakfast we called on David Whitmer, Senior, meeting him just outside of his residence, and introducing ourselves. He invited us into the house and directed us into a small room, presumeably, his own resting and sleeping apartment. John Whitmer,[4] son of John Whitmer, deceased, and two or three more gentlemen, whose names are not remembered, were present. The women folks were house cleaning. (Just our luck). Elder Whitmer remarked that he did not feel much like talking as he had not been feeling well for some time. He appeared feeble. He is now upwards of seventy-six years of age, having been born January 7th, 1805. He is of medium height, and rather of a slender build; but this appearance may be on account of age and recent illness. He has darkish brown eyes, and his hair is white and thin. Has a good head and honest face. He talks with ease and seemed at home with every subject suggested; and without an effort, seemingly, went on to amplify upon it, so that we had nothing to do but question, suggest and listen. His intellect is far more vigorous and retentive than we expected to find. He is careful in his speech, for he studies to express himself in such a way as not to be misunderstood; and it hurts him to be misrepresented. A reporter called to see him some time ago, asked a few questions and went off and published that he had denied his testimony concerning the truth of the Book of Mormon.[5] This hurt him so, that he is very careful, now, to have some known friends present when strangers call to see him. This accounts for the presence of others when we were there. Speaking of Joseph Smith the Seer, he said, and this is very nearly his wording: "It makes no difference what others say, I know Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and he translated the Book of Mormon by the inspiration of God from the plates of the Nephites. Some people think if they can only make it appear that Joseph's life and character were not perfect, and that he had human weaknesses, that it would prove that he was not a prophet; yet the same persons will believe that Moses who killed the Egyptian, and David, who had Uriah killed, and who took a multitude of wives, and Solomon who was a polygamist and idolator; and Peter, who lied and cursed, &c., were all prophets, and should be honored and respected. What the individual life of Joseph Smith was after he translated the Book of Mormon, has nothing to do with the question as to whether he was, or was not inspired to bring that book forth."

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4. On John C. Whitmer, see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 7.

5. Perhaps a reference to VI.A.9, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH JOHN MURPHY, JUN 1880.

"Do you know anything against his character?"

"I know nothing against him. I have heard some things; these I know nothing about. I have nothing to say about the character of any one, only as I know. It is not my mission to talk about the character of any. My mission is to testify concerning the truth of the coming forth of the work of God."

"What kind of man was he when you knew him personally?"

"He was a religious and straightforward man. He had to be; for he was illiterate and he could do nothing of himself. He *had* to trust in God. He could not translate unless he was humble and possessed the right feelings towards every one. To illustrate, so you can see. One morning when he was getting ready to continue the translation, something went wrong about the house and he was put out about it. Something that Emma,[6] his wife, had done. Oliver[7] and I went up stairs, and Joseph came up soon after to continue the translation, but he could not do anything. He could not translate a single syllable. He went down stairs, out into the orchard and made supplication to the Lord; was gone about an hour—came back to the house, asked Emma's forgiveness and then came up stairs where we were and the translation went on all right. He could do nothing save he was humble and faithful."

His statement concerning the vision they had of the plates and the angel was as follows: "I was plowing in the field one morning, and Joseph and Oliver came along with a revelation stating that I was to be one of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon. I got over the fence and we went out into the woods, near by, and sat down on a log and talked awhile. We then kneeled down and prayed. Joseph prayed. We then got up and sat on the log and were talking, when all at once a light came down from above us and encircled us for quite a little distance around; and the angel stood before us. He was dressed in white, and spoke and called me by name and said 'Blessed is he that keepeth His commandments.' This is all that I heard the angel say. A table was set before us and on it the records were placed. The Records of the Nephites, from which the Book of Mormon was translated, the brass plates, the Ball of Directors, the sword of Laban and other plates. While we were viewing them the voice of God spoke out of heaven saying that the Book was true and the translation correct."

We then asked him, "Do you remember the peculiar sensation experienced upon that occasion?" He answered very slowly and definitely.

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6. On Emma Hale Smith (1804-79), see "Introduction to Emma Smith Collection."

7. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

"Yes; I remember it very distinctly; and I never think of it, from that day to this but what that same spirit is present with me."

"How did you know it was the voice of God?"

"We knew it was the voice of God. I knew it was the voice of God just as well as I knew any thing."

This narration was delivered in a mild, but fervent voice; and as he spoke and bore witness, and we listened, the Spirit of God rested in great power upon us like a flame of glory, or burning coal from the alter of God. It inveloped our beings and glowed in our hearts while tears of gratitude and joy flowed down our cheeks. Bro. Blakeslee who sat opposite, but near by and facing me, was so moved by this divine touch—silent and heavenly power—that he could not refrain from weeping. Despite our power of resistance, for a moment we sat speechless, uttered not a word, but with a look exchanged thoughts and read the moving of each other's heart. We were satisfied, established, confirmed. The Spirit of God that had been with me and inspired my soul while defending that Record, and the divinely appointed mission of the Seer, for lo! these many years, while standing and testifying before multitudes, large and small, now appeared and lit up my being as with a flame, as I listened to the voice of a *chief witness* testify of what he had seen, and heard, and felt, in relation to the coming forth of this Latter Day Work. The worthy sage testified truthfully, for God bore witness.

Whatever other men may think of David [p. 68] Whitmer, it is our belief that he is a man of God; and that he is performing his part in this great Latter Day Work, faithfully and acceptably to his heavenly Father. He is respected and honored of his neighbors, and loved and admired by his relatives, of which there is a large circle there, and all in the faith. Who shall say that this man of candor, now standing upon the verge of the grave, has borne a false witness.

Conversation ended, we were soon on the way to Stewartsville [Missouri] ...

Least some may adjudge us prolix, we close

In the faith,
WM. H. KELLEY.

COLDWATER, Mich., Jan. 16th, 1882.

16.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH J. W. CHATBURN, 1882

[Untitled], *Saints' Herald* 29 (15 June 1882): 189.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Jonas W. Chatburn (1821-1902) was born in Lancashire, England. He immigrated to America in 1845, eventually settling in Harlan, Iowa, in 1867. He was baptized into the RLDS church on 11 May 1869 and ordained a high priest on 12 September 1879. He was president of the Harlan Branch for many years and still held that office at his death. Frederick A. Smith said of him at the funeral service: "He was an earnest, faithful worker right up to his death. The Church lost a noble Saint, the community an excellent citizen, the poor a tender-hearted friend, and the family a father, grandfather, brother, a wise counselor. He left a clear record and carried the esteem and respect of all who knew him best" (*Saints' Herald,* 49:413).

In 1882, Chatburn and other family members passed through Richmond, Missouri. Upon returning home, Chatburn apparently wrote a letter to the editors of the *Saints' Herald* in which he gave an account of their interview with Whitmer. The *Herald* gave the following introduction: "Bro. J. W. Chatburn, of Harlan, Iowa, son, wife and daughter-in-law, visited Elder David Whitmer, at Richmond, Missouri, on their way home, and after their return, in answer to a question from us, write about as follows. ..."

"We are making progress in our preparations for church[-]building here. I think we shall meet with good success.

"You asked the question, 'How did you like your visit with Father Whitmer?' It was one of the great events of my life to visit him and Richmond. I was well repaid for time and money expended in making the trip. We all thought we had a splendid feast at Independence, but the visit to David Whitmer was like having the best of the wine at the last of the feast. We made ourselves known to his grandson and he prepared the way for us. We visited Bro. David in the forenoon; and again in the evening at his request. He remarked that we had brought a good spirit with us and he felt like talking. He did talk, and I learned many things that I did not know before about the rise of this work. One thing in particular; he says there were about forty or fifty members in the Church when organized on April 6th, 1830. We have

been told and so recorded in history that there were only six members. He explained it this way,—there were only six Elders. He said that he baptized fourteen in Seneca Lake, a few days before the Church was organized. I asked his wife if she was present when the Church was organized on April 6th, 1830. She replied, Yes; and was a baptized member at that time.[1] We asked him the question: Had Joseph Smith any manuscripts of any kind by him at the time of translating the Book of Mormon that he could read from?

"His answer was: 'No, Sir. We did not know anything about the Spaulding manuscript at that time.'

"We asked him if his testimony was the same now as it was at the time the Book of Mormon was published, regarding seeing the plates and the angel. He rose to his feet, stretched out his hands and said: 'These hands handled the plates, these eyes saw the angel, and these ears heard his voice; and I know it was of God.'[2]

"That was the strongest testimony I ever heard, and I felt that he was telling the truth. ..."

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1. The Whitmers were probably thinking of the first church conference held at Fayette, New York, on 9 June 1830. David baptized his future wife, Julia Ann Jolly, at that time (see VI.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 42), along with ten other converts—not fourteen people on 6 April 1830 as he claimed (ibid.). Whitmer is incorrect in his claim that there were six elders in the church at its organization. However, there were six elders present at the first conference (see discussion in introduction to IV.A.4, JOSEPH KNIGHT, JR., STATEMENT, 11 AUG 1862). Finally, there were twenty-seven members by 9 June and sixty-two by 26 September 1830, another indication that Whitmer was thinking of an occasion other than the 6 April organization (see VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830 & 2 JAN 1831, under 26 September 1830).

2. On another occasion Whitmer denied having handled the plates in vision (see VI.A.24, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ZENAS H. GURLEY, 14 JAN 1885, 1).

17.
David Whitmer Interview with James H. Hart, 21 August 1883 & 10 March 1884

1. James H. Hart, Journal-Notebook, 21 August 1883, Special Collections and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (Hart 1978, 216).
2. James H. Hart to the Editor, 23 August 1883, *Deseret Evening News,* 4 September 1883. See also James H. Hart, *An Interview with David Whitmer in August, 1883* (n.p., 1883), 9 pp (Flake 1978, #3872).
3. James H. Hart to the Editor, 29 August 1883, *Bear Lake Democrat* (Paris, Idaho), 15 September 1883.
4. James H. Hart, "Interview with David Whitmer," *Contributor* 5 (October 1883): 9-10.
5. James H. Hart to the Editor, 18 March 1884, *Deseret Evening News* 17 (25 March 1884).
6. James H. Hart to the Editor, 18 March 1884, *Bear Lake Democrat* (Paris, Idaho), 28 March 1884.
7. James H. Hart to the Editor, 4 April 1884, *Deseret Evening News* 17 (10 April 1884): 2.

EDITORIAL NOTE

James Henry Hart (1825-1906) was born in Huntingdon County, England. In 1847 he converted to Mormonism in London and rose through the ranks of the church before immigrating to the United States in 1854, living briefly in St. Louis, Missouri, and then Bloomington, Bear Lake County, Idaho, where he served as a bishop and subsequently as a counselor in the stake presidency. He also served as a representative in the Idaho legislature in 1876, 1877, and in 1880—the same year he was admitted to the Idaho bar (Jenson 1971, 2:27-28). In August 1883 he was sent to Missouri to obtain a daguerreotype of Oliver Cowdery. It was used to make an engraving for the frontispiece of the October 1883 *Contributor* magazine featuring the three witnesses. The photograph was in the possession of Cowdery's daughter, Marie Louise Johnson, then living in South West City, Missouri. Prior to procuring the photograph, Hart visited and interviewed David Whitmer on 21 August 1883, then returned to interview him again on 10 March 1884 when he returned the photograph (see Hart 1997, 119-23).

1. Journal-Notebook, 21 August 1883][1]

August 21st, 1883.

Richmond[,] Missouri

I met David Whitmer and his son David and had a pleasant conversation with them.

He (David Whitmer, Senior) said persons want to know about the presentation of the plates to himself and other witnesses—but there was a glory attending it that no one could describe.

David Whitmer said, "I have been visited by thousands of people, believers and unbelievers, men and ladies of all degrees, sometimes as many as 15 in one day, and have never failed in my testimony. And they will know some day that my testimony is true. I had a mob of from four to five hundred surrounding me at one time, demanding that I should deny my published statement in the Book of Mormon; but the testimony I bore the mob made them tremble before me.[2] I heard the voice of the Angel just as stated in said Book, and the engravings on the plates were shown to us, and we were commanded to bear record of them; and if they are not true, then there is no truth, and if there is no truth there is no God; if there is no God then there is no existence. But there is a God, and I know it.

"When we were first told to publish our statement, we felt sure the people would not believe it, for the Book told of a people who were refined and dwelt in large cities; but the Lord told us that He would make it known to the people, and people should discover the ruins of the lost cities and abundant evidence of the truth of what is written in the Book."

David Whitmer, Junior,[3] said the manuscript copy they had of the Book of Mormon was marvelously preserved at the time when the town of Richmond was visited by a cyclone. Thirty-two persons were killed; the Court House was blown entirely away. Some of the books were found forty miles distant. The Whitmer house was all blown down except the small

1. According to Hart family members, this source "seems to be a longhand transcription of his shorthand notes, written by James H. Hart in one of his notebooks" (Hart 1978, 216).

2. This seems to be the incident John P. Green related in his 1839 *Facts Relating to the Expulsion of the Mormons ... from the State of Missouri* (see "David Whitmer Addendum").

3. On David J. Whitmer, see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 5.

room where the records were kept—in which room not a window was broken.

David Whitmer, Junior, said, "As I went uptown, an unbeliever said: 'Well, David, how about the records?' I answered, 'They are safe, no doubt.' And sure enough, when I had time to examine the premises, I found all safe."

[*2. Letter to the* Deseret News, *23 August 1883*]

SENECA, Newton County,
Missouri, Aug. 23d, 1883.

Editor Deseret News:

... Having some business in Richmond, Ray County, I took occasion to call on Mr. David Whitmer, who was suffering considerably from the intense heat, but I had, notwithstanding, a long and pleasant conversation with him and his son, David Whitmer, Jr. After mutual introductions, I remarked that although I had no doubt of the truth of his published statement and testimony in the Book of Mormon, I should be pleased to hear the testimony from his own lips. He said: "Persons may attempt to describe the presentation of the plates as shown to himself and other witnesses, but there was a glory attending it that no one could describe, no human tongue could tell the glorious scenes that were presented to them. Joseph Smith was there and Oliver Cowdery[4] and himself—Martin Harris[5] did not come as expected, but they were shown to him a short time after." "Did the personage or angel who showed you the plates tell you his name?" I asked. Mr. Whitmer replied: "No, he did not. The idea has obtained ground that it was Moroni, the last of the Nephite Prophets. It may have been Moroni or it may have been one of the three Nephite Apostles who were promised that they should not taste of death. It is not important who he was, but I know he was a messenger from God. I have been visited by thousands of people, he remarked, believers and unbelievers, amongst them a Governor of this State, gentlemen and ladies of all degrees and from many nations, sometimes 15 or 20 in a day, all wanting to know if these things are true. I have been surrounded by hostile mobs, on one occasion numbering four or five hundred demanding I should deny what is published over my name in the Book of Mormon; but the testimony I gave to that mob made them fear and tremble, and I escaped from

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4. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

5. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

them. One gentleman, a doctor, an unbeliever, told me afterwards that the bold and fearless testimony borne on that occasion and the fear that seemed to take hold of the mob had made him a believer in the Book of Mormon." Mr. Whitmer said further: "I heard the voice of the angel, and saw the engravings on the plates, and the plates, just as stated in the Book of Mormon. And we were commanded to bear record of these things and that the book was translated by the gift and power of God. You see that small table by the wall," he remarked. "Yes," I replied. "Well, there was a table about that size, and the heavenly messenger brought the several plates and laid them on the table before our eyes, and we saw them, and bore testimony of them, and our testimony is true. And if these things are not true then there is no truth, and if there is no truth there is no God, and if there is no God there is no existence. But I know there is a God, for I have heard His voice and witnessed the manifestation of his power." He said moreover, that when they were first commanded to testify of these things they demurred and told the Lord the people would not believe them for the book concerning which they were to bear record told of a people who were educated and refined, dwelling in large cities; whereas all that was then known of the early inhabitants of this country was the filthy, lazy, degraded and ignorant savages that were roaming over the land." The Lord told us, in reply that he would make it known to the people that the early inhabitants of this land had been just such a people as they were described in the book, and he would lead them to discover the ruins of the great cities, and they should have abundant evidence of the truth of that which is written in the book, all of which," said Mr. Whitmer, "has been fulfilled to the very letter."

Mr. David Whitmer, Junr., spoke of the strange and wonderful preservation of the written copy of the book which Oliver Cowdery left in his father's charge, and the hieroglyphics which Martin Harris took to Professor Anthon,[6] of New York. In the cyclone that devastated the town of Richmond a few years ago, the court-house and many other buildings were swept entirely away. Some books belonging to the court-house were carried over 40 miles, and the Whitmer house was all destroyed, except the small room in which the said documents were kept, in which not a window was broken. A few minutes after the catastrophe he met an unbelieving scoffer in the street who said, "Well, Dave, how about those records?" And I told him they were all right, although I had not then had an opportunity to look after them. My father was hurt by the flying timber, for the house on the west side of the road

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6. On Charles Anthon (1797-1867), see introduction to V.D.1, CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834.

was blown through ours, and thirty-two persons were killed and many badly wounded, but when matters had subsided a little and we examined the room and the box where the manuscript was kept we found it to our satisfaction as we had left it, and as it is now, in a good state of preservation." ...

Yours very truly,
JAMES H. HART...

[*3. Letter to* Bear Lake Democrat, *29 August 1883*]

NEW YORK, Aug. 29, 1883.

Editor Democrat:

... I spent one day in Richmond, Mo., and had an interesting interview with David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon. He reiterated his testimony of the visitation of the Angel, and his presentation of the plates of brass and gold, and showing the engraving on said plates, and told it with an earnestness and with a bold assurance that was peculiarly interesting. I have had no doubt for the last 35 years but that the witnesses saw and heard all they have testified. It was, however, intensely interesting to hear this veteran of over seventy years, who has been retired from the Church since the fiendish persecutions by Missouri mobs in 1838. It was I say intensely interesting, to hear him say, "I saw the heavenly messenger, and I heard his voice, and he brought the plates and laid them before us, and showed us the engravings on them and commanded us to bear testimony to all the world, and our testimony is true." ...

Yours very truly,
JAMES H. HART.

[*4. Poem, October 1883*]

I met an aged man the other day,
In Richmond, Missouri, in County Ray,
His step was feeble, but his eye was bright,
And in it beamed intelligence and light.

....

"Pray is it true," I asked, "that you have been
With heavenly messengers, and have seen
The records, called the plates of brass and gold,
Of which Moroni, in his book, has told?["]

....

He lifted up his voice, and thus replied:
"My written statement I have ne'er denied;
I saw the messenger, and heard his voice,
And other things that made my heart rejoice.

"Joseph Smith and Oliver were there,
And what I saw and heard I do declare,
With words of soberness and sacred truth;
I've borne this testimony from my youth.

"I do not know the angel's rank or name,
Who on the great and glorious mission came;
I know that he was clothed with power and might,
And was surrounded with effulgent light.

"No tongue can tell the glory and the power
That was revealed to us in that blest hour.
The plates of brass and gold, with angel's care,
Were placed before us as we waited there.

"We saw the fine engravings on them, too,
And heard the voice declare the book was true.
and what we saw and heard was by the grace
Of Him who died to save the human race.

"We've done as they commanded us to do,
And testify the Book of Mormon's true,
And was translated by the power given
The Prophet Joseph by the God of Heaven.

....

"If this be not truth, there is no truth,
And I have been mistaken from my youth.
If I'm mistaken, you may know from hence
That there's no God, no law, no life, no sense.

"I know there is a God—I've heard his voice,
And in his power and truth do still rejoice;
Though fools may ridicule and laugh to-day,
They yet shall know the truth of what I say.["]

....

I asked a Gentile lawyer if he knew
The witnesses, and if he thought them true.
"Well, yes," he said, "I've known them from my youth,
And know them to be men of sterling truth.

"What David Whitmer says the people know,
May be regarded as precisely so.
He's not a man to shade the truth, or lie,
But one on whom you safely may rely.

....

"Think you that Joseph Smith could them deceive,
By forging plates, could make them all believe
That they had seen an angel of the Lord,
Or perjure them, and all, with one accord?"

....

I asked a Gentile doctor, and was told
That David Whitmer's word was good as gold.
"His honesty is fairly crystallized—
His name will ever be immortalized.

"Although its all a mystery to me,
I know he's honest as a man can be;
I'd stake upon his word my very life,
And so would this my good and noble wife.["]

...

James H. Hart.

[*5. Letter to the* Deseret News, *18 March 1884*]

NEW YORK, March 18th, 1884.

Editor Deseret News:

En route to this city I called on David Whitmer, who had invited me me to visit him again and examine the manuscript copy of the Book of Mormon, etc. On the 10th inst[ant]. [of March.] I had a pleasant interview, a few items of which may not be without interest to many of your readers. He greeted me with a happy smile as he remembered my former visit and the

lines written commemorating the interview, which he endorsed as a correct expression of his sentiments.

MANUSCRIPT COPY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

Knowing the object of my visit, he brought the manuscript, which was carefully wrapped and tied, and with evident satisfaction and modest pride, unwrapped and spread it before me. Considering the fifty odd years since it was in the hands of Major [John H.] Gilbert,[7] the printer, it is well preserved. It is written closely on unruled foolscap of a poor quality, of which, there is fully one half ream, and perhaps more. Being written closely from side to side, there is no blank margin. It is singularly free from corrections, and has no erasures, nor interlineations, so far as I could discover. Quite a number of the sheets had been cut in three pieces or "takes," obviously for the use of the printers. They were replaced in position, small pieces of blank paper placed over, and planed together.

Observing two or three styles of writing, and the certificate from the Clerk of the Court of Wayne County, that it had been copyrighted there in June, 1884 [1829],[8] I remarked that it looked very much as though it was the original copy, and it would in fact take considerable more evidence than I had seen to convince me that it was not the original and only written copy. Mr. Whitmer said, "I know, positively, that it is so. Why, look at this," he remarked, "here is some of my poor old mother's yarn, that was used to fasten the sheets together." And sure enough there was the sheep's gray yarn, that fastened a certain number of sheets together in several divisions. As this is a disputed question, I simply submit the foregoing, leaving each person to judge for himself.

THE SPECIMEN HIEROGLYPHICS.

I was shown the reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics, that were copied from the plates by the Prophet Joseph, and taken by Martin Harris to Professors [Charles] Anthon and [Samuel L.] Mitchell,[9] of New York City, in February, 1828. They are written on unruled paper, about three and a half inches by seven, and all up seven lines, making about thirty-five inches of writing.[10]

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7. On John H. Gilbert (1802-95), see "Introduction to John H. Gilbert Collection."

8. See III.L.12, BOOK OF MORMON COPYRIGHT, 11 JUN 1829.

9. On Samuel L. Mitchell (1764-1831), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 45.

10. See V.E.2, BOOK OF MORMON CHARACTERS, DEC 1827-FEB 1828.

They remind me very much of some Egyptian hieroglyphics I have seen in the British Museum, London, and in other collections. ...

HOW MR. WHITMER FIRST HEARD OF IT.

Mr. Whitmer said the first he heard concerning the Prophet Joseph and the "Golden Bible" as it was then called, was from Oliver Cowdery, who was then quite a young man, about his own age, who went to the neighborhood where Joseph had lived, and where his parents and family still lived and taught school. "Oliver promised if he could find out anything definite and reliable he would let me know. Soon after this Oliver told me that certain young men about Joseph's age, who had been raised with him in the neighborhood, were very angry against Joseph and complained against him bitterly, saying he had not kept his word with them, for he had promised to give them some of the golden plates when he obtained them, whereas he had got them and had not given them any as he had promised. When Oliver suggested to them that perhaps Joseph had not got them, they replied angrily: We know he has, for we have seen the place on the hill where he got them."[11]

Mr. Whitmer, continuing his narrative, said: "Soon after this, Oliver concluded to go and see Joseph and learn all he could about the matter, and promised to write and tell me the result of his inquiries. So about the beginning of April, 1829, he went to Harmony, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, where Joseph had gone to get away from his enemies, and to escape those who were trying to get the plates from him, for he was told by the personage who gave him charge of said plates, that if he should let them go carelessly, or, through negligence, he should be cut off. Soon after Oliver's arrival in Harmony,[12] he wrote to me and said that Joseph had enquired of the Lord concerning him, and had told him [Oliver] secrets of his life that he knew could not be known to any person but himself, in any other way than by revelation from the Almighty.[13]

"Some little time after this he wrote asking me to take a team and fetch Joseph and himself to my father's home, in Fayette, Seneca County, New York, where they would continue the translation. I consulted with my father who consented that I should take a team as requested and bring them home. I

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11. See also VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881. A similar statement was given by Martin Harris (see III.F.10, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEW WITH JOEL TIFFANY, 1859, 167).

12. Cowdery and Samuel Smith arrived at Harmony on 5 April 1829.

13. See D&C 6.

was a little over two and a half days going, and traveled over 40 miles the first day, and met them on the third day at the head of Cayuga Lake.[14] Oliver told me they knew just when I started, where I put up at night and even the name on the sign board of the hotel where I stayed each night, for he had asked Joseph to look in the Seer stone, that he did so, and told him all these particulars of my journey, which Oliver had carefully noted in his book.

"Oliver asked me when I first met them, when I left home, where I stayed on the road, and the names of the persons keeping the hotels. I could not tell the names, but as we returned I pointed out the several houses where I had stopped, when he pulled out his book and found it to be correct even to the names.[15]

THE TRANSLATION.

"In regard to the translation," said Mr. Whitmer, "it was a laborious work for the weather was very warm, and the days were long, and they worked from morning till night. But they were both young and strong and were soon able to complete the work.

"The way it was done was thus: Joseph would place the seer-stone in a deep hat, and placing his face close to it, would see, not the stone, but what appeared like an oblong piece of parchment, on which the hieroglyphics would appear, and also the translation in the English language, all appearing in bright luminous letters. Joseph would then read it to Oliver, who would write it down as spoken. Sometimes Joseph could not pronounce the words correctly, having had but little education; and if by any means a mistake was made in the copy, the luminous writing would remain until it was corrected.[16] It sometimes took Oliver several trials to get the right letters to spell correctly some of the more difficult words, but when he had written them correctly, the characters and the interpretation would disappear, and be replaced by other characters and their interpretation.

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14. This is an obvious error since the "head of Cayuga Lake" is less than ten miles from the Whitmer residence. Whitmer had previously told Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith that when he arrived in Harmony, Smith and Cowdery met him "a little distance from [Smith's] house" (VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878).

15. Cf. VI.A.3, DAVID WHITMER WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* AUG 1875; and VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878.

16. The physical evidence does not bear out Whitmer's description. Variant spellings of words, including proper names, appear uncorrected in the original manuscripts.

"When the seer-stone was not placed in the hat, no characters or writing could be seen therein, but when so placed then the hieroglyphics would appear as before described. Some represented but one word, or name, some represented several, and some from one to two lines.

"Emma,[17] Joseph's wife, came to my father's house a short time after Joseph and Oliver came, and she wrote a little of the translation, my brother Christian wrote some,[18] but Oliver wrote the greater portion of it."

TRUE TO THEIR TESTIMONY.

Mr. Whitmer felt very indignant while speaking of certain statements published recently to the effect that he and Oliver Cowdery had denied their statement as published in the Book of Mormon.[19] This he denounced as false in every particular. He said: "Oliver never wavered in his testimony, and when he was on his death bed, I was there, with many of his friends, until he passed away. He bore the same testimony on his dying bed that he had always borne through life, and earnestly called upon all to cleave to the truth revealed through the Prophet Joseph, and to serve the Lord. As for myself, I have never denied my testimony that is published in the Book of Mormon, for I know that God has revealed these things for the salvation of the children of men, and to Him belongs all the honor, the power and the glory."

Many other interesting items were given by Mr. Whitmer during our interview, but I have already extended this communication much longer than I intended.

JAMES H. HART.

[*6. Letter to* Bear Lake Democrat, *18 March 1884*][20]

NEW YORK, March 18th, 1884.

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17. On Emma Hale Smith (1804-79), see "Introduction to Emma Smith Collection."

18. Christian Whitmer's scribal work is mentioned in VI.A.14, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIME,* 14 OCT 1881; VI.A.18, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE Q. CANNON, 27 FEB 1884; and VI.A.26, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TRIBUNE,* 15 DEC 1885. His handwriting has yet to be identified among the original manuscripts. On Christian Whitmer (1798-1835), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 96.

19. See VI.A.11, DAVID WHITMER PROCLAMATION, 19 MAR 1881.

20. Hart wrote this on the same day he wrote to the *Deseret News*. While

Editor Democrat:

After nearly two weeks traveling, I have reached my old quarters at the Grand Central Hotel, where I shall be pleased to meet my friends when passing to and fro on their missionary labors, or their pleasure trips.

I had a pleasant visit in Salt Lake City for a few days, while en route, and having learned from Pres. Geo[rge]. Q. Cannon, who had lately visited Mr. David Whitmer,[21] that he was expecting me to call again and see the manuscript copy of the Book of Mormon, &c., I called to see him and had a pleasant interview on the 10th inst. Although quite feeble he greeted me with a beaming eye, and a happy smile, as he remembered my former visit, and the lines I wrote upon the interview, which he had read in the *Contributor* for October 1883, and fully endorsed as a correct expression of his sentiments concerning the ministration of the angel, and the plates that were shown him and the other witnesses on that occasion.

Knowing the object of my visit, Mr. Whitmer brought the manuscript, which was carefully wrapt and tied. He untied the string, unwrapped the package, and with modest pride and satisfaction showed the said manuscript. It was well preserved considering the 50 odd years since it was in the hands of the printer. It is closely written on unruled foolscap, which would now be considered a poor quality, of which there is fully one half ream, and perhaps more. Most of it is in the same handwriting, and said by Mr. Whitmer, to be Oliver Cowdery's writing; although his brother Christian, he said, had written a portion of it. It is written closely from side to side leaving no margin. It is singularly free from corrections, and has no interlineations, nor erasure, so far as I could discover. Quite a number of the sheets had been cut in three pieces, obviously for the use of the printer. They were replaced in position and pinned together, small pieces of blank paper being placed over the places cut.

I remarked that it looked very much like the original copy has been described, and finding two or three different kinds of writing, and the clerk of the Wayne Co. Court's certificate, that it had been entered, or copyrighted in said county, I remarked, it would take considerable [more evidence] to convince me that it is not the original and only copy. Mr. Whitmer said he knew positively that it was so; but as this is a disputed question, I simply submit the foregoing as my opinion.

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the two contain similar wording, variations and additions in the present letter warrant its inclusion here.

21. See VI.A.18, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE Q. CANNON, 27 FEB 1884.

I was shown, moreover, the Egyptian characters copied by the Prophet Joseph Smith and taken by Martin Harris to Profs. Anthon and Mitchell of this city, in February 1828. They are written on unruled paper, about three and a half inches deep, by seven inches wide. The writing is in seven lines, making about 34 inches; and reminds me very much of some hieroglyphics I have seen in the British Museum, London, and other collections. ...

Mr. Whitmer said the first he heard concerning Joseph Smith and the "Gold Bible," as it was called—for the name "Mormon" was not then known—was from his friend Oliver Cowdery, who was then a young man about his own age, who went to the neighborhood where Joseph had lived, and where his parents and family still lived, and taught school; he promised if he could learn anything definitely about the matter, to write and let him know, and soon after was told by Oliver that certain young men about Joseph's age, who had been raised with him in the neighborhood, were very angry against Joseph and complained against him bitterly, saying he had not kept his word with them, for he had promised to give them some of the golden plates when he obtained them, whereas he had got them and had not given them any as he had promised. When Oliver suggested to them that perhaps Joseph had not got them, they replied: We know he has, for we have seen the place in the hill where he got them."

Mr. Whitmer, continuing his narrative, said: "Soon after, Mr. Cowdery went to Susquehanna County, Penn, where Joseph had gone to get away from his enemies, and to escape those who were trying to get the plates from him; for he had been told by the personage who gave him said plates, that if he should let them go carelessly or through negligence, he should be cut off. Soon after his arrival in Harmony, he wrote to me and said that Joseph had enquired of the Lord concerning him, and had told him secrets of his life that he knew could not be known in any other way than by revelation from the Almighty. Some little time after, he wrote asking me to take a team and fetch Joseph and himself to his father's house, in Fayette, Seneca County, New York, where they would continue the translation. I consulted with my father who consented that I should take a team as requested, and bring them home. I was a little over two and a half days going, and traveled over 40 miles the first day, and met them on the third day at the head of Cayuga Lake, Seneca Co. Oliver told me, [that] they knew just when I started, where I put up at night and even the name on the sign board of the hotel where I stayed each night, for he had asked Joseph to look in the Seer stone, that he did so and told him all these particulars of my journey. Oliver asked me when I first met them, when I left home, where I stayed on the road, and the names of the persons at Hotels. I could not tell the names; but as we returned I pointed out the several houses where I had stopped, when he took out his book and

found them to correspond even to the names on the sign boards, all of which he had written before we met. As had been told to him by the Prophet, and which agreed in every particular.

["]In regard to the translation it was a laborious work, for the weather was very warm; and the days were long, but both Joseph and Oliver were young and strong and soon able to complete the work. The way it was done was thus: Joseph would place the Seer stone in a deep hat, and placing his face close to it would see, not the Seer stone, but what appeared like an oblong piece of parchment, on which the hieroglyphic would appear, and the translation in the English language, all appearing in bright luminous letters. Joseph would then read it to Oliver, who would write it down as spoken. Sometimes Joseph could not pronounce the words correctly, and if any mistake was made in the copy, the luminous writing, would remain until it was corrected. It sometimes took Oliver several trials to get the right letters to spell correctly some of the more difficult words, and when he had written them correctly the characters and the interpretation would disappear, and be replaced by other characters; and their interpretation. When the Seer stone was not placed in the hat, nothing could be seen therein; but when placed there the hieroglyphics would appear; some represented but one word or, name. Some represented several, and some from one to nearly two lines. Emma wrote some little for Joseph, my brother Christian some, but Oliver Cowdery wrote most of it.["]

Mr. Whitmer felt very indignant while speaking of certain false statements made recently to the effect that he and Oliver Cowdery had denied their statements, as published in the Book of Mormon[,] which he denounced as false in every particular. He said Oliver never wavered in his testimony, and when he [Oliver] was on his death bed he [David] was with him with other[s] of his friends until he passed away. And he [Oliver] bore the same testimony on his dying bed that he had always borne through life. And earnestly called upon all to cleave to the truth revealed through the Prophet Joseph and to serve the Lord. ["]And as for myself I have never denied my testimony contained in the Book of Mormon for I know that God has revealed these things for the salvation of the children of men, and to him belongs all the honor praise and glory."

While speaking of the manuscript copy of the Book of Mormon that Oliver placed in his charge, and its claim as the original copy, and written direct from the translators dictation. He exclaimed, why here is some of my poor old mother's yarn, that was used to fasten the sheets together, and sure enough there was the sheeps gray yarn run through many of the sheets, and fastened about twelve sheets together in the several divisions.

Many other interesting items were given during our interviews but I

have already extended this communication much longer than intended and therefore conclude.

Yours very truly,
JAMES H. HART.

[7. *Letter to the* Deseret News, *4 April 1884*]

NEW YORK, April 4th, 1884.

Editor Deseret News:

The following is taken from the editorial columns of the *Journal and Courier,* New Haven, Conn.:

"When 'the Book of Mormon' was published in 1830 there was published with it a certificate of three men, afterward known as the 'three witnesses,' who declared that they saw an angel of God come down with the golden book which Joseph Smith interpreted. Subsequently all three of these men renounced Mormonism and declared their testimony false. David F. Whitmer, one of the three, is now living, in his 80th year, in Missouri. He was a brother-in-law of Oliver Cowdery, who wrote a copy of the book for Smith."

The subjoined clipping [below] from said journal of April 2d, will explain itself, giving a pleasing change to the policy of the average editor, who when he lies concerning the "Mormons," is [indifferent to errors of fact] whenever he writes about them.

Respectfully,
JAMES H. HART.

THE "BOOK OF MORMON"—MR. WHITMER'S TESTIMONY.

To the Editor of the Journal and Courier:

Whilst in West Haven a few days ago a friend called my attention to a statement made in your issue of the 17th of March, namely, that the three witnesses who declared that they saw an angel of God come down with the golden book which Joseph Smith interpreted had subsequently renounced Mormonism and declared their testimony false.

Having visited Mr. David Whitmer on the 10th of March, and being familiar with his feelings and history, I could give some items that would be interesting to many of your readers who may wish to be informed more fully in relation to his attitude and views concerning said book. Mr. Whitmer is the only living witness of the eleven whose names are published, and who

declare they saw the plates, and one of the three who declared they saw an angel of God who showed them the plates. The three did leave the Church, as you state, but not one of them ever denied the statement aforesaid. The other two—Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris—returned to the Church a few years before their death, and bore the same testimony to the end.

Mr. Whitmer, referring to the statement which had appeared in some other journals, felt very indignant, and declared to me, in the presence of his son and others, that his statement was true, that he had never denied it, and that he was with Oliver Cowdery on his death bed, that he then and there bore the same testimony he had always borne through life.

Mr. Whitmer is not a member of the "Mormon" Church. He retired with a great many others in 1838, when the Church was expelled from Missouri at the point of the bayonet. The sufferings and afflictions were greater than many could bear, and they dropped out by the way, but they never wavered in their statement, and though nearly 80 years old, as you say, he is immovable in regard to what he saw and heard as published on the fifth page of the Book of Mormon, as any person may know by calling upon him at his home in Richmond, Ray County, Missouri.

For the benefit of those who would wish for further evidence, and have no opportunity of hearing his statement orally, I subjoin a statement published over his signature and dated Richmond March 19th, 1881. ...[22]

As stated above, I had an interview with the said David Whitmer two weeks ago, when he reiterated the above with a boldness and assurance that would convince the most skeptical of his absolute conviction of the truth of his remarkable statements. A person might believe him to be deceived, but could not believe him to be insincere.

JAMES H. HART.

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22. Whitmer's proclamation is here deleted (see VI.A.11, DAVID WHITMER PROCLAMATION, 19 MAR 1881).

18.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE Q. CANNON, 27 FEBRUARY 1884

1. George Q. Cannon, Journal, 27 February 1884, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
2. George Q. Cannon, "Topics of the Times," *Juvenile Instructor* 19 (1 April 1884): 106-7.

EDITORIAL NOTE

George Quayle Cannon (1827-1901) was born in Liverpool, Lancashire, England. His parents, George and Ann Quayle Cannon, were converted to Mormonism in 1840 and immigrated to Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1842. In 1847 he traveled with the main body of the church to Salt Lake City. Among his many church offices, he is most noted for having served as a counselor to LDS presidents John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow. He died in Monterey, California (Jenson 1971, 1:42-51).

The portion of his journal that relates to his interview with Whitmer was published sixty-one years later in the LDS *Instructor* (80 [November 1945]: 518-21) and more recently in Cook (1991, 106-110). Because I was denied access to the Cannon journal, I have followed Cook's transcription; Cook thanks "Adrian Cannon for his permitting us to proof this entry against his [Adrian's] typescript of the Diary of George Q. Cannon." The second selection below is an account for which Cannon evidently relied on his journal. It was published a little more than a month following the event.

[*1. Journal, 27 February 1884*]

Wednesday, February 27, 1884. Took train at 6:45 a.m. for Richmond. Changed at Lexington Junction where we remained until after 10 a.m. At Richmond I met David J. Whitmer,[1] son of David Whitmer, one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon. He said his father was feeble, but he thought he could arrange for me to see him. I took dinner at the Wasson House, and

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1. On David J. Whitmer, see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 5.

at about half past one Mr. Whitmer [the son] called at the Hotel for me. His father lived close by. He pointed out the track of a cyclone which had visited the town in 1878 and which had left their house, rather the room in which the manuscript of the Book of Mormon was kept, in such a condition as to astonish all the people—the roof was taken off, but nothing was disturbed and the glass was not broken even.

The old gentleman (he was born January 1805) soon entered. He is a man who probably stood in his early manhood 5 feet 10 inches or perhaps 5 feet 11 inches in height, not fleshy at present, but rather inclined to leanness. I noticed in shaking hands with him that the thumb of his right hand is missing and the hand has a long scar in the center. His hair is thin and he is rather bald. His nose is aquiline, and his eyes black or a dark brown. His likeness, which was shown me, painted in oil when he was 32 years, makes him appear a handsome man of marked features, rather Jewish looking, with a head of thick hair inclined to curl.

He had his son bring in the manuscript of the Book of Mormon, which he says is the only manuscript of which he knows anything. It is in the handwriting of several persons which he says were Oliver Cowdery, Emma Smith, Martin Harris, and perhaps some of it in that of his brother Christian, who assisted the Prophet somewhat.[2] This is the manuscript from which the printers, he says, set the type of the Book, and he pointed out to me where it had been cut for convenience as copy. I noticed printer's marks through the manuscript, still it was very clean for copy that printers had handled. This he explained as the consequence of the care taken by Oliver Cowdery[3] in watching the manuscript while in the printer's hands. It was fastened together, not as a whole, but a few folios, not more than a dozen, with woolen yarn, which he said was his mother's. This was exceedingly interesting to me and I examined it with care, and a feeling of reverence.

But with this was another paper which I thought of surpassing interest. It was the characters drawn by Joseph Smith himself for Martin Harris[4] to show to Professors Mitchell[5] and Anthon.[6] There were seven lines, the first

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2. Royal Skousen has determined that the handwritings in the printer's copy are those of Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, and an unknown scribe (see Skousen 2001, 9-10).

3. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

4. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

5. On Samuel L. Mitchell (1764-1831), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 45.

6. On Charles Anthon (1797-1867), see introduction to V.D.1,

four being about twice as long in size as the three last.[7] Here was the very paper which Is[a]iah saw in vision years before, and which he called the "words of a book [Isa. 29:11]." Though evidently long written, the characters were as clear and distinct as though just written. This was also the case with the manuscript of The Book of Mormon. It was wonderfully well preserved and clear. This, David Whitmer and the family think (in which belief I share), is due to the power of God. I cannot describe the characters particularly. They were glyphs and contained many forms.

In speaking of the translating he said that Joseph had the stone in a hat from which all light was excluded. In the stone the characters appeared and under that the translation in English and they remained until the scribe had copied it correctly. If he had made a mistake the words still remained and were not replaced by any other.

In describing the visit of the angel he said that it was shortly before the completion of the translation when there were but few pages left.[8] He was plowing when Joseph and Oliver came to him and the former told him that he was chosen to be one of the three witnesses to whom the angel would show the plates. He also told him that the Lord had promised to make this manifest and now was the time.

They went out and sat upon a log conversing upon the things to be revealed when they were surrounded by a glorious light which overshadowed them. A glorious personage appeared and he showed to them the plates, the sword of Laban, the Directors, the Urim and Thummim and other records. Human language could not, he said, describe heavenly things and that which they saw. The language of the angel was: Blessed is he that believeth and remaineth faithful to the end. He had his hours of darkness and trial and difficulty, but however dark upon other things[,] that [vision] had ever been a bright scene in his mind and he had never wavered in regard to it; he had testified fearlessly always of it, even when his life was threatened. Martin Harris was not with them at the time that he and Oliver saw the angel, but he and Joseph afterwards saw the same, and he thus became a witness also.

I spent the afternoon with them till 5 p.m. when I took the hack [old horse] to return to Lexington Junction. ...

CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834.

7. Cannon subsequently mentions this: "I omitted to mention that Joseph had written in English above the characters, the word 'caracters.'" See V.E.2, BOOK OF MORMON CHARACTERS, DEC 1827-FEB 1828.

8. In late June 1829.

[*2. Article, 1 April 1884*]

On my return from my visit to the East I took the opportunity of calling at Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, to see the last surviving witness of the three to whom the angel exhibited the plates of the Book of Mormon—David Whitmer.

From Kansas City I took the train for Lexington Junction, and there changed cars for Richmond. Upon arriving at the station I inquired of a gentleman who was standing there if he knew Mr. Whitmer. He told me that his son, David J. Whitmer, would be there presently, as he owned the omnibus which carried passengers from the station to the hotels. In a short time the omnibus drove up, and the gentleman of whom I had made the inquiry pointed Mr. Whitmer out to me. I found him very courteous, and upon informing him who I was he appeared to have been expecting me, having heard through some of the papers that I was intending to make such a visit. He said his father was growing very feeble and he did not like to have him interviewed, but he would arrange for me to see him as soon as he could.

I drove to the hotel and after dinner Mr. Whitmer called upon me and conducted me to the residence of his father. On our way there he pointed out the track of a cyclone which had visited the town in 1878, and which had left their house, or rather the room in which the manuscript of the Book of Mormon was kept, in such a condition as to astonish all the people. The roof of the house was blown off; but nothing in this room was disturbed. The glass was not even broken. This was a cause of astonishment to the neighborhood, and the family evidently ascribe the protection of the room and its contents to the fact of the manuscript being there. [p. 106]

David Whitmer, who was born in January, 1805, is growing feeble, but his mind is bright and apparently unimpaired. He is rather slender now and probably stood in his early manhood five feet ten or perhaps five feet eleven inches in height. I noticed in shaking hands with him that the thumb of his right hand is missing and the hand has a long scar in the center from some injury that he had received. His hair is thin and he is rather bald. His nose is aquiline. His eyes black, or a dark brown. I noticed a slight German accent or tone in his talk. The Whitmer family is of German origin, his mother, I believe, having been born on the Rhine. He has evidently been a man who in his prime must have been interesting, and, I should think, fine looking. I was shown a likeness of his, painted in oil, when he was thirty-two years old. This makes him appear as handsome, of marked features, rather Jewish looking, with a head of thick hair inclined to curl.

After some little conversation he inquired of me if I would like to see the manuscript, and gave his son a key and told him to bring it in. I found it

wonderfully well preserved, written in different hand-writings. He says they are the writings of Oliver Cowdery, Emma Smith, Martin Harris, and, perhaps, some of it that of his brother Christian, who assisted the Prophet Joseph. This is the manuscript, Mr. Whitmer says, from which the printers set the type of the Book of Mormon, and he pointed to me where it had been cut for convenience as "copy." I noticed some printers' marks on the manuscript. Still it seemed unusually clean for "copy" that printers had handled. I commented upon the cleanness of the manuscript, and he explained that it was in consequence of the care taken of it by Oliver Cowdery in watching it while in the printer's hands. It was fastened together not as a whole, but a few sheets—probably not more than a dozen—with woolen yarn, which he said was his mother's. I examined this manuscript with great interest and with a feeling of reverence. How many associations cluster around this! What wonderful changes have occurred since the few who were interested in this work labored in its preparation under the direction of the Prophet! Everything connected with the work then was in the future. Their minds were filled with anticipation concerning the greatness of the work the foundation of which they were assisting to lay. But how little conception after all, probably, these men had, with the exception of Joseph, of the wonderful character of the work to be accomplished. Thoughts like these passed through my mind while looking at the manuscript.

But there was a paper with this, which, if anything, was still more interesting than the manuscript. It was the characters drawn by Joseph himself from the plates for Martin Harris to take to show the learned professors, so wonderfully predicted in the 29th chapter of Isaiah. There were seven lines of these characters, the first four being about twice as large in size as the last three. In English Joseph had written over the lines the word "characters." He had spelled this word, "caractors." Though these characters had evidently been written for a long time, they were as clear and distinct as though just penned. Here was the very paper which Isaiah saw in vision about 2,600 years before, and which he called "the words of a book." How wonderfully God in His own way brings to pass the fulfillment of the predictions of his servants! To the ordinary person it might seem like a trifling thing to copy these characters and send them "to one that is learned;" but it was of sufficient importance in the mind of the Lord for him to inspire his servant Isaiah to exactly describe the occurrence. This shows how much importance the Lord attached to these details connected with the foundation of this work and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

David Whitmer told me he was plowing when Joseph and Oliver came to him to speak about his being one of the witnesses. He already knew that the Lord had promised to show the plates to three witnesses. Joseph then in-

formed him that he was chosen to be one of the three. They went out and sat upon a log, conversing upon the things to be revealed, when they were surrounded by a glorious light which overshadowed them. A glorious personage appeared unto them and exhibited to them the plates, the sword of Laban, the Directors which were given to Lehi (called Liahona), the Urim and Thummim, and other records. Human language cannot, he said, describe what they saw. He had had his hours of darkness and trial and difficulty since that period; but however dark upon other things his mind had been, that vision had ever been a bright and beautiful scene in his memory, and he had never wavered in regard to it. He had fearlessly testified of it always, even when his life was threatened. Martin Harris was not with them at the time Joseph and Oliver and he saw the angel; but he and Joseph afterwards were together, and the angel exhibited the plates to Martin Harris also, and he thus became a witness.

I spent several hours there, and to me they were very interesting. The old gentleman was able to stay in the room only a portion of the time; he had to retire to rest; but I had the company of his son, David J. Whitmer, and his nephew, John C. Whitmer[9] (who is a son of Jacob Whitmer, one of the eight witnesses of the Book of Mormon), while I remained. ...

9. On John C. Whitmer, see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 7.

19.
DAVID WHITMER TO E. L. KELLEY, 3 MARCH 1884

David Whitmer to E. L. Kelley, 3 March 1884, Whitmer Papers, RLDS Church Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On 3 March 1884, David Whitmer wrote to Edmund L. Kelley (1844-1930),[1] a prominent member of the RLDS Church then debating Church of Christ minister Clark Braden in Kirtland, Ohio. Whitmer described the Book of Mormon manuscript in his possession and reaffirmed his and Oliver Cowdery's testimonies. Whitmer's letter was written in response to the following inquiry from Kelley:

CLEVELAND, OHIO, March 1, 1884.

DAVID WHITMER, ESQ., RICHMOND, MO., *Dear Sir:*—A person by the name of J. H. Gilbert, at Palmyra, N.Y., claims, I am told, that he set the type for the Book of Mormon and that there were no capital letters beginning sentences and proper names in the printers' manuscript; and if there are any in now they have been put in since.[2]

Will you please examine the manuscript in your possession, which you claim to be the original of the Book of Mormon, and ascertain as to whether there are capital letters, and whether, if there are such, they are in capital writing? Or have they been placed in since?

Does the manuscript show any marks of having passed through the printers' hands? You will oblige by answering at once, as I desire to get the facts in the matter. It is also claimed that Oliver Cowdery denied his testimony.

Very Respectfully,
E. L. KELLEY.

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1. On Edmund L. Kelley, see "Introduction to Edmund L. and William H. Kelley Collection."

2. See JOHN H. GILBERT TO CLARK BRADEN, 27 FEB 1884, n. 1. Although Gilbert's claim is exaggerated, Royal Skousen notes that "Gilbert's punctuation and paragraphing marks are found throughout many pages of the printer's manuscript" and that "Gilbert occasionally marked capitalization and

Kelley's letter and Whitmer's reply were included in the published account of the Braden-Kelley Debate (Braden and Kelley 1884, 396). However, the following transcription is from the original letter in the RLDS Church (now Community of Christ) Library-Archives.

Richmond, Mo., Mar[ch] 3rd, 1884

E. L. Kelley

—Dear Sir—

Yours of 1st rec[eive]d. In answer to your 1st question

1st The Capitals are in the first writing—

2d They are the manuscripts used by the printer & bear unmistakeable evidence of the printers useing them. As many of that profession have attested—Oliver Cowdry never to my knowledge denied any part of his testimony, on the contrary[,] as I have done[,] protested against every fabrication made by designing persons & parties & emphatically testified as written in the Book of Mormon until Death which occured in this place[.] his wife & child yet living furnish one of the best pictures of a living faith in what their father testified to before death as written in the B[ook] of M[ormon].

David Whitmer
per [George W.] Schweich

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made spelling corrections as well as a few emendations in the printer's manuscript" (Skousen 2001, 15).

20.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH E. C. BRIGGS AND R. ETZENHOUSER, 25 APRIL 1884

E. C. Briggs to Joseph Smith III, 4 June 1884, *Saints' Herald* 31 (21 June 1884): 396-97.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On 25 April 1884, David Whitmer was interviewed at his home by RLDS Apostle Edmund C. Briggs (1835-1913)[1] and Rudolph Etzenhouser (1856-1918),[2] also of the RLDS Church. In the following letter to Joseph Smith III, dated 4 June 1884, Briggs relates the details of the interview.

No. 663 Walnut St.,
CHICAGO, Illinois,
June 4th, 1884.

Bro. Joseph Smith:—On April 25th, with Bro. R. Etzenhouser in company, I called upon David Whitmer, which I had longed to do for years. We were very hospitably entertained, and enjoyed the interview much. The following are some of the facts as stated to us:

Oliver Cowdery's[3] name being mentioned we asked as to his last statement. In response we were told, that it was re-affirmed, accompanied with a solemn charge to keep the manuscript as he had.

"Would you like to see them?"

I replied that we would. He stepped into an adjoining room and in a few moments brought them to us. They were large sheets of foolscap paper, were rather brown, or yellow colored, not so clear and white as the paper of

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1. On Edmund C. Briggs, see introduction to I.F.1, EMMA SMITH BIDAMON INTERVIEW WITH EDMUND C. BRIGGS, 1856.

2. Rudolph Etzenhouser was born in Nevada County, California. He was baptized into the RLDS Church in 1867 by E. Henry Webb, and was ordained an elder in 1883 by Joseph R. Lambert and Zenas H. Gurley. He died at Independence, Missouri (Knisley 1948, "Etzenhouser").

3. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

now a days; written closely in a fine hand, with capital letters in all proper places, and well preserved. He then remarked:

"I was present when Joseph gave these manuscripts to Oliver, O, it was such a solemn charge. He (Joseph) said, [']I feel it in my bones that there will be a division in the church, like it was with the Nephites and Lamanites, and if these manuscripts are not preserved, I fear that the church may be injured, and when you deliver them up to others, be sure they are left in good hands.' I [Whitmer] now see why they should be preserved. A delegation once waited on me from Utah, Orson Pratt headed it,[4] to secure them. And he said:

"'Set your own price on them. There is millions in the treasury and we are authorized to draw any amount for them, so you may not be particular, ask any price.'

"I replied, They are not for sale. He said:

"'Why not?[']"

"I answered, I know, and that is enough. There is not enough gold in the world to purchase them. Pratt urged the matter saying:

"'You are not very well off, and it will do your children good.'

"I then told him, You have not got money enough in Utah to purchase them."

O, brethren, the above sentences were spoken by the good old man in such accents and tone, it fairly gave life to his sterling worth, as the man more precious than fine gold, even a man worth more than the golden wedge of Ophir. (Isaiah 13:12). His integrity is above suspicion. God bless his memory and his heart, ever more; amen.

This brings to my mind a statement of the Elect Lady, Emma,[5] in the winter of 1856. She said to me, "When you see David Whitmer you will see an honest man." And in the same conversation, she remarked of her husband Joseph's limited education while he was translating the Book of Mormon, and she was scribe at the time, "He could not pronounce the word Sariah." And one time while translating, where it speaks of the walls of Jerusalem, he stopped and said, "Emma, did Jerusalem have walls surrounding it." When I [Emma] informed him it had, he replied, "O, I thought I was deceived."[6]

Bro. Whitmer added that since Oliver's death it was alleged that they

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4. See VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878.

5. On Emma Hale Smith (1804-79), see "Introduction to Emma Smith Collection."

6. See I.F.1, EMMA SMITH BIDAMON INTERVIEW WITH EDMUND C. BRIGGS, 1856.

both had denied their testimony. He said that preachers and others got this up and heralded it about.

NARRATIVE OF SEEING THE ANGEL.

"In June, 1829, [when] I [David Whitmer] saw the angel by the power of God, Joseph, Oliver and I were alone, and a light from heaven shone round us, and solemnity pervaded our minds. The angel appeared in the light, as near as that young man. [Within five or six feet].[7] Between us and the angel there appeared a table, and there lay upon it the sword of Laban, the Ball of Directors, the Record, and Interpreters. The angel took the Record, and turned the leaves, and showed it to us by the power of God. They were taken away by the angel to a cave, which we saw by the power of God while we were yet in the Spirit. My testimony in the Book of Mormon is true; I can't deviate from it. I was troubled with so many by letter and otherwise, all over the United States, and some from Europe, that I made my proclamation of March 19th, 1881.[8] In this way thousands read it, who would never have done so otherwise. I have the original manuscripts. They have the printer's marks. The printers here have examined them, and say they are genuine. When being printed, Oliver Cowdery would take about a dozen pages of them at a time, and remain and proof read and see that the work was done properly, and continued his vigil to the end."

Brother in Christ, after a visit with Bro. David Whitmer, one of the chosen witnesses of the Book of Mormon, I want to say that I felt to admire the man; his humble, meek manner is wonderful to behold, in comparison with the self-called ministry of the present age. He is a devout Christian, and speaks of Bro. Joseph, and the rise of the latter day work with endearing words of love. As he said:

"The boys, Joseph and Oliver, worked hard, early and late, while translating the plates. It was slow work, and they could write only a few pages a day."

Of Joseph he continued;

"He could not do a thing except he was humble, and just right before the Lord."

I said, "Why not?"

He replied:

"The Urim and Thummim would look dark; he could not see a thing in them." [p. 396]

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7. Brackets in original.

8. See VI.A.11, DAVID WHITMER PROCLAMATION, 19 MAR 1881.

"How did it appear in them?" we asked.

His answer was:

"The letters appeared on them in light, and would not go off until they were written correctly by Oliver. When Joseph could not pronounce the words he spelled them out letter by letter. Ah! Joseph was a good man, but he had a hard task to manage with the people in the early days of the church. They were sectarian (Brigham Young[9] was only a sectarian) and came in with all of their own views, and were hard to manage. In fact, they sought office in the church, and when they were ordained it was only putting new wine into old bottles in many cases."

I asked him why he did not go with the church.

He replied:

"I had good reasons, but do not wish to speak of them now. I was directed to remain here in Richmond."

He gave me his statement entitled "Proclamation," of March 19th, 1881, saying:

"I have but a few left."

I remarked that more should be published. He answered:

"You may tell Joseph he may print them, and send them[,] broadcast [them], if he will not change them; print them just as they are."

Bro. David is a bright looking man, nearly eighty years old. Firm as a rock in Christ, and in his testimony of seeing the angel of God, as he descended from heaven in a halo of light, and turned over the leaves of the plates just as a man would the leaves of a book. His family, wife, son and daughter, who were present, are of a quiet, meek spirit. All seem to dwell in love, and are firm in Christ, and love to bear their testimony in the gospel, and hear the aged witness talk, just as though they had never heard it before, though it has been their theme all these days. ...

Yours in bonds of truth and love,
E. C. BRIGGS.

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9. On Brigham Young (1801-77), see introduction to III.K.19, BRIGHAM YOUNG ACCOUNTS, 1855 & 1857.

21.
David Whitmer Interview with Joseph Smith III and Others, July 1884

Joseph Smith III, Notes for Memoirs, 862-63, Joseph Smith III, Papers, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

EDITORIAL NOTE

A committee from the RLDS church visited David Whitmer in Richmond, Missouri, in 1884 to compare the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon with printed versions. The committee consisted of Alexander H. Smith, William H. Kelley, Thomas W. Smith, and Joseph Smith III. They arrived on 8 July, began working the following day, and continued until 17 July. Thomas Smith and Alexander Smith kept notes and a daily record, from which a report was compiled and published in the *Saints' Herald,* 23 August 1884 (31:537-38; see also VI.A.22, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *ST. LOUIS REPUBLICAN, JUL 1884*). In his memoirs, Joseph Smith III concluded: "The result of the examination shows clearly that there had been no fatal divergence in the text and descriptions, the supposed errors being chiefly in verbiage, by none of which was the sense of the text changed" (p. 862, Community of Christ Library-Archives). While the committee was involved with the documents, a "Colonel Giles," probably James T. Child, of Richmond arrived, accompanied by a Captain Fall, and questioned Whitmer about his testimony. Although Smith failed to mention the day the interview occurred, his journal indicates that he met "Col Giles" on 9 July (Joseph Smith III, Diary, Community of Christ Library-Archives). The following is the RLDS president's account of Whitmer's comments on that occasion.

The portion of the memoirs with the interview was dictated by Joseph Smith III to his son, Israel A., on 13 October 1913. Following the former's death in 1914, his memoirs were published serially in the *Saints' Herald* (1934-1937). The portion under discussion appeared, with only slight variation, in 1936 (83 [28 January 1936]: 114; cf. Cook 1991, 134-35; Joseph Smith III, *Joseph Smith III and the Restoration,* eds. Mary Audentia Smith Anderson and Audentia Anderson Hulmes [Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1953], 311-12).

... The Colonel [Giles][1] in an affable and friendly manner discussed with Elder [David] Whitmer the evidence which he had borne, and suggestively asked the question if it had not been possible that Elder Whitmer had been mistaken and had been moved by some kind of mental disturbance or hallucination in which he was deceived when he stated he had seen the personage and the angel to which he referred, the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and Sword of Laban. I remember very distinctly the manner in which Elder Whitmer rising to his full height, a little over six feet, said solemnly and impressively, "No sir, I was not under any hallucination nor was I deceived. I saw with these eyes, I heard with these ears, I know whereof I speak." The persons present[,] including the Colonel and friend[,] stood under the impressive silence as in the presence of an angel himself. I went out of the room with Colonel Jiles [Giles] and Captain Fall and the Colonel said to me, "It is somewhat difficult, Elder Smith, for us every day men to believe the statement made by Mr. Whitmer, but one thing is certain, that no man could [p. 862] hear him make his affirmation as he did to us in there and doubt the honesty and sincerity of the man himself. He fully believes he saw and heard as he stated he did." We were wonderfully blessed at being permitted to hear this testimony of Elder Whitmer. ...

1. This was very likely Col. James T. Child(s) (see VI.A.7. DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 4).

22.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *ST. LOUIS REPUBLICAN*, JULY 1884

"Revelation Revisers," *St. Louis Republican* 77 (16 July 1884): 7; reprinted in the *Saints' Herald* 31 (9 August 1884): 516-17.

EDITORIAL NOTE

From 8 to 17 July 1884, an RLDS church committee consisting of Joseph Smith III, Alexander H. Smith, William H. Kelley, and Thomas W. Smith, visited David Whitmer in Richmond, Missouri. The Committee's purpose was to compare the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon in Whitmer's possession with various published editions (see VI.A.21, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH SMITH III AND OTHERS, JUL 1884). While this committee was at work in a room in Whitmer's house, a reporter from the *St. Louis Republican* visited to interview Whitmer. Later that month the *Republican* printed an article that featured the RLDS committee's work but also contained a brief account of Whitmer's testimony.

Interest has been revived in questions relating to the origin of the Church of the Latter Day Saints and the authenticity of the manuscript from which the Book of Mormon was printed, and which is now being compared with the various editions of that book by a commission now sitting at Richmond, Mo. Dispatches to the REPUBLICAN a week or two since gave an account of the proceedings of the commission, but other dispatches, stating that the commission was composed of a delegation from Utah, and representing that the work of comparison is being done from parchment and from the original plates, with other glaring mistakes, is almost too absurd for refutation. It has been known for many years that the original manuscript, as dictated by Joseph Smith, and from which the first, or Palmyra (N.Y.) edition of 1830 was printed, has been in possession of David Whitmer of Richmond, who was one of the original, and only surviving witness of the revelator's work. It is known to many that the church authorities of Salt Lake have made overtures to Mr. Whitmer to get possession of the manuscript, but without avail, he holding the document as a sacred deposit.

A VISIT TO RICHMOND.

To carry out a purpose contemplated for some time, a REPUBLICAN representative took the train at St. Louis, and arriving in Richmond next morning, he was driven through a portion of that beautiful town, now fully recovered from the devastation caused by the cyclone of 1878, and set down at the Wasson house [inn]. Nearly the first man struck happened to be Mr. David J. Whitmer,[1] the son of David Whitmer, to whom the purpose of the visit was made known. Mr. Whitmer stated that owing to the advanced age and feeble condition of his father's health, the family had objected to visitors out of a feeling of curiosity calling on the old gentleman and interrogating him on these matters. He objected to these visits, and though his memory was unimpaired relating to bygone events, it was rather unpleasant and did no good. The commissioners were in session at his house, and it was for them to say whether they desired to be interviewed, but as for seeing the old man it would be better to get Mr. Farris, Gen. Doniphan[2] or Col. Childs,[3] old friends of his, to be introduced. The Hon. John T. Farris,[4] the well-known and able representative from Ray county in the legislature, was readily found at his law office, and with him a call was made at the residence of Mr. Whitmer. He occupies a tasty looking frame dwelling, which was nearly destroyed by the great cyclone and has since been rebuilt. The old gentleman was at work in his garden when the cyclone swept over the town, and was wounded on the head by a flying missile. He is well fixed, with pleasant surroundings, having been engaged in the livery business, from which he has retired with a competency. The walls of the lower parlor are ornamented with a few pictures, among which is a portrait taken of Mr. David Whitmer when he was thirty-five years of age, betokening a more robust health, florid face, and determined energy. The portrait of his wife hangs by the side, a pleasant beauty, who is still alive and going down the hill-side of life the cheerful companion of her husband.

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1. On David J. Whitmer, see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 5.

2. Alexander William Doniphan (1808-87) was born in Mason County, Kentucky. A prominent Missouri lawyer, he is best known to Mormons for his defense of the Saints beginning in 1833 and for refusing to carry out an execution order against church leaders. He was elected to the state legislature three times (1836, 1840, and 1854). He died at Richmond, Missouri (Jessee 1992, 541).

3. Jacob T. Child (see VI.A.7. DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 4).

4. This person remains unidentified.

Word was brought down that Mr. Whitmer was engaged with the commission, and the invitation was extended to call on him there, as he felt too feeble to walk down stairs. Mr. Whitmer was found in the chamber above, lying on his bed in a room adjoining the commission, and communicating with it by an open door.

THE WITNESS OF THE REVELATION.

The old gentleman rose from the bed and received his callers very cordially. In person he is above medium height, very lean and feeble, and, with stooping shoulders, bears the marks of advancing age, being now in his eightieth year. The lips are drawn in, from the absence of the teeth, and he converses in a tremulous voice. So great is the change that he would hardly be identified from his picture taken in early manhood, during the glowing vigor of health. He said he was ready to respond to inquiries of his past history, but intimated that it had all been published, and, as for that portion connected with his sojourn in Missouri, there was so much of it that he did not wish to go over it again. He preferred that such information as was desired should be obtained from the gentlemen composing the commission, and thereupon the callers, accompanied by Mr. Whitmer, entered their room.

THE REVISERS.

At one end was a table around which the ministerial conclave was seated, each holding a book, except one of the members, who was reading from a manuscript. It was a convocation of men whose labors would doubtless he handed down in the church as a memorable event, that of verifying the various editions of the Book of Mormon from the original manuscript, in the presence of the only surviving witness of this great revelation to man. As Mr. Farris and the REPUBLICAN representative entered the room these holy men suspended their work, and rising to their feet, the former were introduced to President Smith[5] and by him were introduced to the other members of the board. The reception was extremely cordial, and while Father Whitmer, in his feeble state, extended himself on a bed near the table, the commissioners participated in a running conversation for half an hour. The following are the members of the commission: Rev. Joseph Smith of Lamoni, Decatur county, Iowa, president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ, commonly called Latter Day Saints, and editor-in-chief of the Saints' *Herald.* He is the eldest son of Joseph Smith the prophet and inspired translator of the Book of Mormon from the golden plates.

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5. On Joseph Smith III (1832-1914), see introduction to I.F.3, EMMA SMITH INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH SMITH III, FEB 1879.

William H. Kelley[6] of Kirtland, Ohio, missionary in charge of Michigan, Northern Ohio, Western New York and Western Ohio mission.

Alexander H. Smith[7] of Independence, Mo., missionary in charge of Pacific Slope mission, comprised of California, Oregon and Nevada. He is the second son of the prophet, Joseph Smith.

Thomas W. Smith[8] of Independence, Mo., missionary in charge of Australian mission, including Australia and Society islands and other Polynesian isles.

The three last named are a committee appointed by the general conference of the reorganized church, held at Stewartsville, Missouri, April 6 to 15, 1884, to compare the Palmyra and the current editions of the Book of Mormon with the original manuscript now in the hands of David Whitmer of Richmond, Ray county, Mo. The object of the examination is to discover whether there are differences as alleged by some between the printed edition and the manuscript. They have been engaged in the work for five days up to Monday night, and expect to spend some three days more, closing Wednesday night.

HOW THEY DO IT.

The Manuscript of the Book of Mormon.—The manuscript held by "Father Whitmer," as he is designated by the commission, is handed out in sections, the leaves being firmly held together. It is the original from which the Palmyra or first edition was printed in 1830, and bears very plainly the printer's marks. The manuscript, which was examined by the reporter, is common, rather coarse foolscap in use fifty years ago, and the penmanship is in a medium hand, plain and perfectly legible. It appears that some five different persons were engaged in writing the document as Joseph Smith dictated the subject matter. Father Whitmer, who was present very frequently during the writing of this manuscript affirms that Joseph Smith had no book or manuscript, before him from which he could have read as is asserted by some that he did, he (Whitmer) having every opportunity to know whether Smith had Solomon Spaulding's or any other persons' romance to read from. The commission have before them various editions of the Book of Mormon, first and most important the original Palmyra edition of 1830. Then there are the

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6. On William H. Kelley (1841-1915), see "Introduction to William H. and Edmund L. Kelley Collection."

7. Alexander Hale Smith (1838-1909) was the son of Joseph and Emma Smith.

8. On Thomas W. Smith (1838-94), see introduction to VI.A.4, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS W. SMITH, JAN 1876.

Kirtland edition of 1835 [1837], the Nauvoo edition of 1843 [1840 and 1842], the Plano (Ill.) edition, and various editions published by the polygamists of Salt Lake City. There are also five European editions published in England, Denmark and Sweden, Germany and France. One of the commission said it must be stated in behalf of the Salt Lake edition that they have made no changes from the original manuscript, except what may be said of other editions, and these consist merely of changes in verbs and tenses. Whenever an alteration is detected which consists, for instance, of the substitution of the relatives, who, which and that, and the tenses of the verbs, the person holding the edition in which such change is detected erases the word and substitutes the original word as it exists in the manuscript, interlining the correct word in the printed book with a pencil. The intention is probably to print an edition, thus corrected from the manuscript, which will be recognized as genuine at least by the reorganized branch of the saints.

HE WILL NOT GIVE IT UP.

It is well known that some years ago Anson [Orson] Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, the son of Hyrum Smith of the Salt Lake branch, came to Richmond, and calling on Father Whitmer offered him any sum he would name (the amount being stated at $100,000) if he would surrender to them the original manuscript.[9] They said they wanted the manuscript solely for the purpose of placing it in the archives of the church at Utah for preservation. Mr. Whitmer informed them that he would not part with it for any amount of money. He was its custodian, and it should be preserved as a sacred deposit by himself and heirs.

The latest edition of the Book of Mormon has been verified [versified?] the same as was done with the Bible, for convenience to the reader. The manuscript was written from the dictation of Joseph Smith by the following amanuenses: Oliver Cowdery,[10] Emma Smith,[11] wife of Joseph Smith; Christian Whitmer[12] and Martin Harris,[13] and it is supposed that Alva

9. See VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878.

10. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

11. On Emma Hale Smith (1804-79), see "Introduction to Emma Smith Collection."

12. On Christian Whitmer (1798-1835), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 96.

13. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

Hale[14] was also employed as one of the scribes, but Hale only wrote a small portion.

HOW WHITMER GOT IT.

Oliver Cowdery, the principal witness and scribe of Joseph Smith, became the possessor [of the manuscripts], which he retained and brought with him to Missouri. Oliver Cowdery was the brother-in-law of Jacob Whitmer,[15] and he died at Richmond in 1850, in the house adjoining Whitmer's, and the latter naturally came in possession of the document. Oliver Cowdery is buried in the old cemetery, near Richmond, and his wife and daughter are still living in this state.

For the brief time that the commissioners were disengaged there was a good time for interviewing, but there were too many of them at once, and, like the fowler distracted by the flocks of pigeons on the trees, in the wheat stubble, with others flying overhead, shots were rather scattering. ...

WHITMER'S TESTIMONY.

While president Smith was wrestling with the charges of fraud and delusion urged against his father, the REPUBLICAN representative turned to Mr. Whitmer, who was lying on the bed and listening with much apparent interest to the colloquy, occasionally interposing a word in confirmation of Mr. Smith's statements and made some interrogatories.

"Yes," said Mr. Whitmer, "I have no objection to giving the particulars of my early life. I was born near Harrisburg, Penn., at a small trading post, in 1805. My father moved to York state when I was four years old. We settled in Fayette township, Seneca county, between Seneca and Cayuga lakes, four miles from Seneca Falls, two miles from Waterloo, seven miles from Seneca. I lived there till I was 26 years old. The first time I saw Joseph Smith was in Harmony, Penn. I joined him before the Book of Mormon was printed at Palmyra, N.Y. I was there during the time the book was printed. The translation was done in my father's house; at least two months of the time,[16] was thus taken up with it there. Oliver Cowdery was the principal amanuensis. Cowdery died in 1880 [1850], near my house, in Richmond. I saw the stone

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14. On Alva Hale (1795-1882), see introduction to V.A.2, ALVA HALE STATEMENT, 1834.

15. On Jacob Whitmer (1800-56), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 98.

16. Other sources indicate that Whitmer believed the work of translation occupied only one month, June 1829, at his father's Fayette residence (VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881; VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 30).

which formed the box or receptacle in which the metallic plates were found, on the hillside, Commarah [Cumorah].[17] Joseph Smith claimed that an angel informed him of the place where the plates were hidden. I saw the plates; they were bound together with leaves, and held together by rings, two at each corner of the bundle and one in the centre.

"Joseph Smith dictated every word in the book. The understanding we have about it was that when the book was discovered an angel was present and pointed the place out. In translating from the plates, Joseph Smith looked through the Urim and Thummim, consisting of two transparent pebbles set in the rim of a bow, fastened to a breastplate. He dictated by looking through them to his scribes." At this stage of the explanation, Mr. Whitmer showed those present a specimen of the characters copied from the plates.[18] It is on a piece of strong paper about four by eight inches, and covered with one hundred or more hieroglyphics and figures.

THE HIEROGLYPHICS.

It is the identical specimen which was sent to Prof. [Charles] Anthon,[19] of New York, and shown by him to Prof. [Samuel L.] Mitchell,[20] of which the New York papers made mention at the time.[21] The specimen was sent to Prof. Anthon by Martin Harris and returned to him. Profs. Anthon and Micthell [Mitchell] both admitted they were ancient characters, resembling the reformed Egyptian and Hebrew characters.[22] Mr. Whitmer holds these characters, as well as the manuscript of the Book of Mormon and the records of the church, in great reverence, and would not part with them for any money or allow them to go out of his house. He says he is utterly opposed to

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17. Note that Whitmer only states that he saw the "stone" of the receptacle, not the receptacle itself (see also VI.A.3, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* AUG 1875).

18. See V.E.2, BOOK OF MORMON CHARACTERS, DEC 1827-FEB 1828.

19. On Charles Anthon (1797-1867), see introduction to V.D.1, CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834.

20. On Samuel L. Mitchell (1764-1831), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 45.

21. See III.F.2, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEW WITH *ROCHESTER GEM,* CIRCA JUN 1829.

22. The claim that Anthon and Mitchell confirmed the ancient status of the Book of Mormon characters is asserted in the official version of the story (see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 9). This was corrected by Anthon (see V.D.2 CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834; V.D.3, CHARLES ANTHON TO THOMAS WINTHROP COIT, 3 APR 1841).

polygamy and remarked that when he was connected with the church in York state, "we wouldn't," he said, "have fellowship even with any person who was divorced, and Joseph Smith was opposed to it." ...[23]

Mr. Whitmer on being asked if he saw the angel, as stated in some accounts, opened the book and pointing to a section said, "There is my testimony. Read it; that tells all that is necessary for me to say about it. That contains the solemn testimony of myself and the other persons named." Mr. Whitmer's response was regarded as closing out any further interrogatory under that head, and an estoppel was put on such inquiries. ...[24]

FIRM BELIEVERS.

This subject may be closed with the observation that, whatever the gentiles may believe in regard to the Mormons, the sons of Joseph Smith and David Whitmer and his sons believe in it with a firm conviction and undoubted faith. The honesty and excellent character of the Whitmer family are substantiated by the people of Richmond without exception. That David Whitmer, who holds many of the revelations of the early founders of that church with no higher esteem than outsiders, and the fact that he had a falling-out with Joe Smith and in a measure separated himself from the saints who went to Nauvoo, and still holds to the genuineness of the Book of Mormon with an unalterable faith in its truth is certainly a remarkable fact. Whitmer holds the Book of Mormon in the same estimation that he holds the Bible, believing that the one is a supplement of the other, and that whoever disbelieves in either does it at the hazard of his eternal salvation. That the supposition that the Rev. Solomon Spaulding wrote the Book of Mormon is absurd and "a weak invention of the enemy." A man who would put forth a book, however meritorious in other respects, as a novel without plot, character or any of the essentials of a work of fiction, is censurable for his stupidity.

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23. Remarks about polygamy deleted (see Cook 1991, 144).

24. The Testimony of Three Witness and other extraneous items are deleted here (see Cook 1991, 145-51).

23.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH UNKNOWN REPORTER, CIRCA JULY 1884

"The True Book of Mormon," ca. July 1884, unidentified and undated newspaper clipping, William H. Samson, Scrapbook, 18:76-77, Rochester Public Library, Local History Room, Rochester, New York.

EDITORIAL NOTE

This clipping is undated but begins with "Richmond, Mo., July 18." The year 1884 is indicated by the presence of the RLDS committee examining the Book of Mormon manuscript at David Whitmer's residence (see VI.A.21, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH SMITH III AND OTHERS, JUL 1884). The interview is similar to VI.A.14, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* 14 OCT 1881, and not very accurate.

... Mr. Whitmer's faith in what he claims to have seen is remarkable. He recited his experience at the time of the revelation to his visitors as follows: "In 1828, when I lived in Ontario county, N.Y., there was great excitement over the discovery by Joseph Smith, a farmer in our neighborhood, of a great treasure. Nothing was known of it in a definite way by my family until the next year, in June, when Smith visited my father's house. While there he was busily engaged in the translation of the book, which I learned he had found in the form of gold plates, on the hill Cumorah, about two miles from Palmyra. I saw the plates frequently in Smith's hands,[1] but, as the characters inscribed thereon were something like Egyptian hieroglyphics, I could make nothing out of them. Smith, however, had no difficulty in deciphering them, and as he dictated Oliver Cowdrey[2] wrote. I asked Smith once how he came to find the plates, and he told me that the place on the hill was pointed out to

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1. Readers will note the reporter's implication that Whitmer saw the plates uncovered in a non-visionary setting. This is contradicted by Whitmer's other statements assembled in this volume.

2. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

him by an angel in dazzling apparel. They were in a stone casket, and purported to be the history of the Nephites, a nation that had passed away. The plates, as I saw them, were fastened with three rings. About half of them were loose and movable, but the others were solid, as if sealed. Smith said in explanation of this that the angel had told him very impressively that the loose plates alone were to be used, and that the sealed portion was not to be tampered with.

I became interested in the matter, as Smith was a man of good repute. After the plates had been translated, six months having been passed in the work, the same heavenly visitant appeared to Smith and reclaimed the tablets, informing Smith that he would replace them with other records of the lost tribes that had been brought with them from Asia, and that they would all be forthcoming when the world was ready to receive them. I saw this apparition myself and gazed with awe on the celestial messenger and heard him say: 'Blessed is the Lord and he that keeps his commandments.' Then, as he held the plates and turned them over with his hands so that we could see them plainly, a voice that seemed to fill all space was heard, saying: 'What you see is true. Testify to the same.' Oliver Cowdrey and I, standing there, felt, as the white garments of the angel faded from view, that we had received a message from God, and we have so recorded it. Two or three days later the same angel appeared to Martin Harris[3] while he was in company with Smith, and placed the same injunction upon him. He described the sight and his sensations to me, and they corresponded exactly with what I had seen and heard. In his translation of the tablets Smith used a small oval or kidney-shaped stone, which seemed endowed with the marvelous power of converting the characters on the plates, when used by Smith, into English. He would then dictate and Cowdrey would write. Frequently one character would make two lines of manuscript, while others made but a word or two. I can assert emphatically, as did Cowdrey, that while Smith was dictating he had no manuscript, notes, or other means of knowledge, save the seer stone and the characters as shown on the plates. ...

3. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), whose vision occurred the same day as Whitmer's, see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

24.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ZENAS H. GURLEY, 14 JANUARY 1885

"Copy—Questions asked of David Whitmer at his home in Richmond[,] Ray County[,] Mo—Jan 14—1885. relating to Book of Mormon, and the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of L.D.S. by Elder Z[enas] H. Gurley," Zenas Gurley Collection, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Zenas H. Gurley, Jr. (1842-1912), was born in Hancock County, Illinois. He was baptized into the RLDS Church on 13 May 1861. In 1870 he located in Decatur County, Iowa, where he married Gracie Robinson in 1872. As a traveling minister of the RLDS Church, his preaching tours included Utah in 1874 and 1878. He was ordained an apostle in 1874 but soon fell out of favor with church leaders for his reformist activities and finally withdrew from fellowship in 1886 (*Biographical and Historical Record of Ringgold and Decatur Counties, Iowa,* 1887, 539-44; Vlahos 1971).

According to archivists, the original document was donated to the LDS Church in 1967 by Alvin L. Morris of Tacoma, Washington. Portions of the interview were published in Zenas H. Gurley, "The Book of Mormon," *Autumn Leaves* (Lamoni, Iowa) 5 (1892): 453.

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1 [Q]—Do you know that the plates seen with the Angel (on the table) were real metal, did you touch them?

Ans We did not touch nor handle the plates.

2 Q—Was the table literal wood? or was the whole a vision such as often occurs in dreams &c?

Ans—The table had the appearence of literal wood as shown in the vision, in the glory of God.

3 Q—Did you see the Urim and Thummim, what was it?

Ans—I saw the "Interpreters" in the holy [vision][1][.] They looked like whit-

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1. Document damaged; word in brackets supplied from *Autumn Leaves* 5 (1892): 453.

ish stones p[ut in the][2] rim of a bow, looked like spectacles only much larger. ... [p. 1] ...[3]

9. Q. Who was the Angel that showed the plates to you and Cowdery,[4] and have these plates been seen since?

Ans—I do not know as no name was given. I have never seen the plates since. ... [p. 1, back] ...[5]

13. Q.—Were you present when Joseph Smith received the revelation commanding him and Oliver Cowdery to ordain each other to the Melchisedek Priesthood, if so, where was it and how?

Ans—No I was not—neither did I ever hear of such a thing as an angel ordaining them until I got into Ohio about the year 1834—or later.[6]

14. Q. Can you tell why that Joseph and Oliver were ordained to the lesser Priesthood by the hand of an Angel but in receiving the Higher they ordained each other?[7]

Ans—I moved Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to my fathers house in

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2. Ibid.

3. Material dealing with the three witnesses leaving the church deleted (see Cook 1991, 152-53).

4. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

5. Material unrelated to pre-Ohio Mormonism deleted (see Cook 1991, 154).

6. The revelation of the "Melchizedek Priesthood," which occurred at the home of Peter Whitmer, Sr., sometime in June 1829, was never considered to be the same as the visitation of Peter, James, and John. (Concerning the former event, see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 26-27; I.A.21, JOSEPH SMITH TO THE CHURCH, 6 SEP 1842, 936). Whitmer probably heard about the angelic priesthood ordinations in 1834 when Cowdery and Smith began discussing them publicly (I.A.8, JOSEPH SMITH RECITAL TO KIRTLAND [OH] HIGH COUNCIL, 12 FEB & 21 APR 1834; III.G.6, OLIVER COWDERY TO W. W. PHELPS, 7 SEP 1834, 13-16; see also Vogel 1988, 117-20).

7. Regarding the June 1829 revelation of the "Melchizedek Priesthood," Joseph Smith's history states: "[W]e had not long been engaged in solemn and fervent prayer, when the word of the Lord, came unto us in the Chamber, commanding us; that I should ordain Oliver Cowdery to be an Elder in the Church of Jesus Christ, And that he also should ordain me to the same office" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 26-27).

Fayette[,] Seneca County[,] New York, from Harmony, Penn. in the year 1829, on our way I conversed freely with them [p. 2] upon this great work they were bringing about, and Oliver stated to me in Josephs presence that they had baptized each other seeking by that to fulfill the command—And after our arrival at fathers sometime in June 1829. Joseph ordained Oliver Cowdery to be an Elder, and Oliver ordained Joseph to be an Elder in the Church of Christ. <and during that year Joseph both baptized and ordained me an elder in the church of Christ.>[8] Also, during this year the translation of the Book of Mormon was finished, And we preached ~~preached~~, baptized and ordained some as Elders, And upon the Sixth day of April 1830, six Elders together with some fifty or sixty (as near as I recollect) of the members met together to effect an organization.[9]

I never heard that an Angel had ordained Joseph and Oliver to the Aaronic priesthood until the year 1834[,] [183]5. or [183]6—in Ohio. my information from Joseph and Oliver upon this matter being as I have stated, and that they were commanded so to do by revealment through Joseph.[10] I do not believe that John the Baptist ever ordained Joseph and Oliver as stated and believed by some. I regard that as an error, a misconception. [p. 2, back] ...[11]

19. [Q] Were the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated in Joseph Smiths possession while translating and seen and handled by several different persons, if not, where were they?
Ans—I do not know.

20. Q. Did Joseph use his "peep stone" to finish up the translation? if so why?

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8. David Whitmer was baptized and "possibly ordained [an] apostle [elder] [cf. D&C 18]" in June 1829 (Cook 1981, 24).

9. Whitmer is incorrect as to the number of elders and members as of 6 April 1830. He probably has reference to the first conference held in Fayette, New York, on 9 June 1830 (see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 82; and introduction to IV.A.4, JOSEPH KNIGHT, JR., STATEMENT, 11 AUG 1862).

10. Lucy Smith's understanding of Joseph's and Oliver's baptisms was similar: "one morning however they sat down to their usual work when the first thing that presented itself to Joseph was a commandment from God that he and Oliver should repair to the water & each of them be baptized they immediately went down to the susquehana<h> river and obeyed the ~~comm[andment]~~ mandate given them through the urim and thumim" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:94. See also VI.F.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO JOSEPH SMITH III, JUL & SEP 1872; and Vogel 1988, 104-6).

11. Material unrelated to pre-Ohio Mormonism deleted (see Cook 1991, 155-56).

Ans—He used a stone called a "Seers stone," the "Interpreters" having been taken away from him because of transgression.[12]

21. Q. Had you seen the plates at anytime before the Angel showed them to you?

Ans—No. [p. 3, back] ...[13]

25. Q. Were you present during any of the time of translation, if so, state how it was done.

Ans—The "Interpreters" were taken from Joseph after he allowed Martin Harris[14] to carry away the 116 pages of Ms [manuscript]—of the Book of Mormon as a punishment, but he was allowed to go on and translate by the use of a "Seers stone" which he had, and which he placed in a hat into which he buried his face, stating to me and others that the original Character[s] appeared upon parchment and under it the translation in english, which [enabled him][15] to read it readily. While Brother Whitmer was too feeble to write much, being unable to write the answers to the foregoing 25 questions in person—Yet it was with his consent and in his presence that I wrote ~~them~~ and corrected them, as they appear here.

Jan. 21—1885.[s] Z H. Gurley

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12. See VI.A.8, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO *SAINTS' HERALD,* 13 OCT 1879.

13 Material unrelated to pre-Ohio Mormonism deleted (see Cook 1991, 157).

14. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

15. Document damaged; words in brackets supplied from *Autumn Leaves* 5 (1892): 453.

25.
David Whitmer Interview with James Henry Moyle, 28 June 1885

1. James Henry Moyle, Diary, 28 June 1885, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
2. James Henry Moyle, "Address by Elder James H. Moyle before the Ensign Stake Conference, in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, Sunday, March 22, 1908," Gordon B. Hinckley, *James Henry Moyle: The Story of a Distinguished American and an Honored Churchman* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951), 366-67.
3. James Henry Moyle, Reminiscence, 24 November 1928, Joseph E. Cardon and Samuel O. Bennion, eds., *Testimonies of the Divinity of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Its Leaders* (Independence, Missouri: Press of Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1930), 303, 305.
4. James Henry Moyle, Statement, *Conference Reports,* April 1930, 121-22.
5. James Henry Moyle, "David Whitmer's Testimony," *Liahona* 36 (13 September 1938): 150-51; reprinted in the *Deseret News* (Church Section), 2 August 1941.
6. James Henry Moyle, "Address Given by James H. Moyle at the Regular Sacrament Meeting, Fourth Ward, Pioneer Stake, 18 March 1945," Gene A. Sessions, ed., *Mormon Democrat: The Religious and Political Memoirs of James Henry Moyle* (Salt Lake City: Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975), 444-47. The section of Moyle's 1945 address dealing with his interview with David Whitmer was published almost verbatim in the *Instructor* 80 (September 1945): 400-404.

EDITORIAL NOTE

James Henry Moyle (1858-1946) was born in Salt Lake City, Utah. After graduating from the University of Michigan's law school in June 1885, he served as the U.S. Commissioner of Customs. In 1928 he was appointed president of the Eastern States Mission. He died in Salt Lake City (P. Nibley 1953, 92).

Moyle interviewed David Whitmer at his residence in Richmond,

Missouri, on 28 June 1885. He mentioned in 1945 that the idea occurred to him after reading "in one of the local papers that David Whitmer was alive and that he had given a very interesting interview to a newspaper man" (*Instructor,* September 1945, 400). On 10 May 1885, as he was preparing to return to Utah from Michigan where he had attended law school, he received a letter from his father: "David Whitmer, being the only one living of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon, it is my wish that you make it a point to call and see him for it will be of advantage to you in a time to come" (James Moyle to James H. Moyle, 10 May 1885, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah; see also Sessions 1975, 150). Moyle said that he conducted the interview in lawyer-like style but, despite his training, regretted that he had "somehow failed to take an affidavit from Brother Whitmer" (Sessions 1975, 152). Immediately following the interview, he made a brief entry in his diary. Later, soon after his arrival in Salt Lake City, he wrote a longer version in the "Expense Account" section of his diary (Sessions 1975, 459). In addition to these two contemporary diary entries, his reminiscences are included below.

[*1. Diary, 28 June 1885*]

Called on David Whitmer Sen. was introduced by Wm Marshall.[1]

Mr Whitmer conversed and showed to me the papers [*of the Book of Mormon manuscript*] for 2 1/2 hours. was very kind but had trouble in keeping him on the points in issue, He was some what spiritual in his explanations[.] He was not as materialistic in his descriptions as I wished. ...

[*"Expense Account" section*][2]

Interview with David Whitmer Sen.[,] June 28, 1885[,] Richmond[,] Ray Co.[,] Mo.

Spent 2 1/2 hours in Conversation.

Said true church name was [*blank space*] "The Church of Christ[.]" Change from this name was made in Kirtland[,] Ohio[,] in 1835 or about that time.[3] The name was recorded in County seat as above.

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1. William Marshall, age forty, is listed in the 1870 census of Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, as a shoemaker from Scotland (1870:578).

2. The expense account portion of the diary lacks pagination, so I have indicated page breaks beginning with "p. 1."

3. Whitmer complains about the 1834 change to "The Church of the Latter-day Saints" (J. Smith 1948, 2:63). On 26 April 1838, the church received its present name, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (D&C 115:4).

Both Mr Whitmer and son claim to belong to the Church of Christ but not one encorporated, or that pays tithing[.] Yet David Whitmer Sen. admitts that there was some thing [p. 1] like tithing in the church in Joseph Smiths day but that it was introduced by [Sidney] Rigdon.[4] That Rigdon was the means of making many inovations

Mr David Whitmer Senior is now 80 years old. He is some what feeble but claims that he will preserve the ~~plates~~ <manuscript> and should he til God will raise up another which indications would point to his only son,[5] the Livery man, who seems to thoroughly imbibe the ideas of his father, and would seem to be after his fathers own heart. They both ~~de~~ disbilieve ~~in~~ in the [p. 2] church of Utah or the Josephites.

Mr Whitmer says there is no high priesthood on the earth that Christ is the only high Priest that there is but one Priesthood and in it are only Elders, Priests[,] teachers and deacons.

Mr D[avid]. Whitmer Sen did not handel the plates. Only seen <saw> them, says Martin Haris[6] and Cowdry[7] did so they say!

Says he did see them and the angel and heard him speak. But that it was indiscribable that it was through the [p. 3] power of God (and was possibly [in the spirit] at least) he then spoke of Paul hearing and seeing Christ but his associates did not [Acts 9:7; 22:9]. Because it is only seen in the Spirit.

I was not fully satisfied with the ex=planation. It was more spiritual than I anticipated.

D[avid]. Whitmer Severed ~~himsh~~ him self from the Church in 1838 Because Joseph and the body of the people had departed from the first principals and had gone into Bank=ing and land spec~~ul~~=ulations &c. [p. 4] and was making new inovations. ... [p. 5] ...

The Manuscript consists of 464 pages of of closely written fools cap. that will average about 37 lines to page and 18 wordes to a line

The witnesses did ~~Dav~~ not sign the original manuscript though [they] were present and ordered Oliver Cowdry to sign for them[.][8]

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4. On Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), see introduction to I.A.13, SIDNEY RIGDON ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1836.

5. On David Whitmer, Jr., see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 5.

6. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

7. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

8. Moyle himself noted in his diary, "The statement that the three witnesses did not sign the manuscript but that Oliver Cowdery signed for them and

The priservation of the Manuscript [p. 6] is remarkable especially concidering that it came through so many hard and unprotected Journeys[.] In the first edition there are 588 pages.

David Whitmer Sen. is 5 f[ee]t 10, in height, is of fair complection[,] long face, and rather of an intellectual cast. He lives in a some what small 2 story house.

His doctrine is a holding fast to first principals he firmly maintains the truth of his statement in the Book of Mormon. [p. 7]

[*2. Address, 22 March 1908*]

... From my boyhood I had read the Book of Mormon, and during my study of the same, found it nothing but that which is virtuous, pure and ennobling—a great and wonderful history of a pre-historic people who lived on this continent in former ages. I was always interested in utilizing such opportunities as were given me to demonstrate its divinity, to know whether or not I might be deceived, and whether my parents, grandparents and friends were likewise deceived. Therefore, on my way home from school in 1885, I took advantage of the opportunity to visit David Whitmer, another of the Three Witnesses, then an old, gray-haired man, bowed in years and expecting almost any time the summons to call him thence to his eternal reward. As I left the train in the little village of Richmond, Missouri, I inquired of those whom I met: What kind of a man is David Whitmer? From all I received the same response, that he was a good citizen, an honest man, and that he was highly respected in the community. I went to his humble home, for it was a humble home, and I told him of my origin, my belief, and as a young man starting out in life I wanted to know from him, older than my grandfather, what he knew about [p. 366] the Book of Mormon, and what about the testimony he had published to the world concerning it. He told me in all the solemnity of his advanced years, that the testimony he had given to the world, and which was published in the Book of Mormon, was true, every word of it,

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at their request is doubtless true as to the copy which David Whitmer had. The writing itself indicates that. Joseph Fielding Smith, church historian, says his father said that in his interview and that of Orson Pratt, David Whitmer admitted that the three witnesses signed the original manuscript" (quoted in Sessions 1975, 461-62; see also VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878). Whitmer was unaware that two manuscript copies of the Book of Mormon had been made and that the manuscript in his possession was the second copy that Cowdery had prepared for the printer.

and that he had never deviated or departed in any particular from that testimony, and that nothing in the world could separate him from the sacred message that was delivered to him. I still wondered if it was not possible that he could have been deceived. I wondered if there was not something in that psychological operation which some offer as the cause of these miraculous declarations and by which he could have been deceived—although there were three witnesses present besides the Prophet Joseph Smith, who saw and heard the same mighty and solemn truths; so I induced him to relate to me, under such cross-examination as I was able to interpose, every detail of what took place. He described minutely the spot in the woods, the large log that separated him from the angel, and that he saw the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, that he handled them,[9] and that he did hear the voice of God declare that the plates were correctly translated. I asked him if there was any possibility for him to have been deceived, and that it was all a mistake, but he said, "No." I asked him, then, why he had left the Church. He said he had not, but the Church had left him. He said that his faith in the fundamental principles of the gospel, which had been revealed prior to the year 1835, had never been changed; that he was still devoted to them and believed in them just as much as he ever did, and was trying to live those principles and exemplify them in his life. He said he knew Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, that through him had been restored the gospel of Jesus Christ in these latter days. To me this was a wonderful testimony. ...

[*3. Reminiscence, 24 November 1928*]

... It was my privilege to hear from the lips of David Whitmer himself in 1885 the solemn and unqualified declaration that he did see the Angel of God, when he presented to the Three Witnesses the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, and heard him say that they had been translated correctly. In his testimony to me about three years before his death, he also said in all solemnity that though he was alienated from him, because he had fallen, nevertheless Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God, and did receive revelations from heaven. He was an old man, respected by his neighbors, well preserved, and intelligent. I [was] a boy, leaving college, just entering upon life's activities, reverently and pathetically appealing for the truth, as he, in his eighties, with hair perfectly white, was contemplating the end of his

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9. The assertion here that Whitmer handled the plates is contradicted by Moyle's diary, which states that "Mr D[avid]. Whitmer Sen did not handel the plates. Only seen <saw> them" (see above).

[p. 303] ...[10] [p. 304] earthly career. To have been insincere seems impossible, would have made him a hideous, soulless mental deformity. ...

[*4. Statement, April 1930*]

... I shall never forget my experience early in July, 1885, as I was returning home from the University of Michigan where I graduated in 1885. I went directly to Richmond, Missouri, for the sole purpose of meeting the then remaining living witness to the divinity of the Book of Mormon, David Whitmer. I inquired of the bus driver, the hotel clerk, and others, as far as possible, as to the character and reputation of David Whitmer. All said he was a fine old man, an excellent citizen, and was highly respected in the community. I introduced myself by presenting him with a book that I thought would please him, and said to him that I had just graduated from college. He was then in his eighties, with his hair and beard white, but in fair health. It was about three years before his death. I said to him: "I was born and reared in the Church and I do pray of you to let me know if there is any possibility of your having been deceived. I am just commencing life as you are preparing to lay it down, and I beg of you to tell me if there is anything connected with the testimony which you have borne to the world that could possibly have been deceptive or misunderstood." I further said, in an earnest youthful appeal, that I did not want to go through life believing a falsehood, that it was in his power to make known the truth to me. He described to me the details of the occasion, of the angel presenting the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. The scene was in the woods, with nothing between the angel and himself except a log that had [p. 121] fallen and was lying between them. He declared that he saw the angel who had with him the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, and that in the presence of the angel he did hear the angel declare that they had been translated correctly. While I am speaking from memory, the foregoing most essential facts to me and which were the sole object of my visit, were so indelibly impressed upon my mind, that they are perfectly clear and unmistakable. I asked him many questions concerning his experiences with the origin of the Book of Mormon, and why he left the Church, all of which he endeavored to answer frankly. We talked for a considerable time. His mind seemed clear and his mentality above rather than below the average. He said he had never left the Church, that they had maintained a branch of the Church in Richmond, and that he had always been active in it; that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and that the revelations he received up to the year 1835 were from God, but

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10. Photograph deleted.

that he accepted none of them subsequent to that time. He appeared to have become embittered against Sidney Rigdon especially, and I fancied turned against the Prophet because of his placing Rigdon ahead of those who had stood by the Prophet in his early work.

He said with seeming pride and much interest, that he had the first copy of the manuscript from which the Book of Mormon was printed, in his humble home. And it was a humble home. That when the great cyclone struck Missouri, and houses were blown about and destroyed, every room in his home was destroyed except that in which the manuscript was kept. He seemed to feel that it was divinely protected. President Joseph F. Smith[11] advised me that the copy of the manuscript was not the original, but one of the three originals.[12] His sincerity was plainly shown when I asked him if he would sell the manuscript and place a price upon it. He replied that he would not. ...

[*5. Statement, 13 September 1938*][13]

I was always deeply interested in the Book of Mormon, and had been on a mission to the Southern States before I entered the University of Michigan. During my three years' residence at the University I learned that David Whitmer was still living and in good health. I concluded to visit him on the way home to Salt Lake City. I graduated the latter part of June, 1885, and arrived in Richmond, Missouri, early in July.

Richmond is a small, rural town. I talked with the hack driver (that is what they called them) who took me to the hotel, and learned from him that David Whitmer was a highly respected citizen of the city. I likewise questioned the clerk of the hotel, with the same results. I made such inquiry as I could concerning him during my visit of part of a day.

I found David Whitmer seated under a fruit tree in front of his home, which was located near the street and surrounded by an orchard. I understood that he had been bothered a good deal with curiosity seekers, and to make him feel more at home with me, I presented him with an appropriate book. I said that I had just graduated as a law student and was on my way

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11. On Joseph F. Smith (1838-1918), son of Hyrum Smith and sixth president of the church, see Jenson 1971, 1:66, 3:781, 4:246, 319, 341.

12. Either Joseph F. Smith or James H. Moyle errs since there were only two manuscripts of the Book of Mormon: the dictated manuscript and the printer's copy.

13. Cook 1991, 161-64, uses the 1941 reprint in the *Deseret News* rather than the original 1938 publication in the *Liahona*.

home, and was extremely anxious to obtain from him whatever he would be good enough to tell me about the Book of Mormon, the plates from which it was translated and his testimony concerning the same which he had given to the world.

I entered in a little diary which I kept the mere fact that I had visited David Whitmer and that he had verified all that had been published to the world concerning the Book of Mormon by him in his testimony, and that was about all. In making that visit I had no thought of anything but my personal knowledge and did not contemplate publishing anything concerning it—it was purely an individual matter with me at the time. I told my friends about it and spoke of it in the ward, but at that time it seemed to be common knowledge. David Whitmer died about three years after I saw him. My memory of the main facts is perfectly clear. I have always enjoyed good health, never better than at the present.

David Whitmer was a man above medium height, slender rather than stout and was in his shirt-sleeves. His hair was white, as was his long, patriarchal beard. As I remember, he was a man of fairly intellectual appearance, for the plain citizen that he was, and of good countenance. I am quite sure he was a serious-minded man.

I told him that I had been born in the Church, my mother also; that my father had joined the Church when he was a boy in his teens; that I had grown up believing implicitly in the Book of Mormon; that I was about to commence life's activities as he was getting ready to lay them down, and pleaded with him to tell me the truth—not to permit me to go through life believing in a falsehood—that meant so much to me. I told him that he knew the facts and urged him to tell me just what had happened in connection with the introduction of the Book of Mormon. I seemed to gain his confidence and felt free to ask him questions, and in fact did everything that I could think of that would bring out the facts, particularly all of the circumstances and details of his seeing the Angel, seeing and handling the plates and where the interview with the Angel Moroni took place and the conditions and circumstances surrounding the same.

He said that they (Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris) were out in the primitive woods in Western New York; that there was nothing between them and the Angel except a log that had fallen in the forest; that it was in the broad daylight with nothing to prevent either hearing or seeing all that took place. He then repeated to me that he did see and handle the plates; that he did see and hear the Angel and heard the declaration that the plates had been correctly translated; that there was absolutely nothing to prevent his having a full, clear view of it all. I remember very distinctly asking him if there was anything unnatural or unusual about the sur-

roundings or the atmosphere. He answered that question. I do not remember exactly the words he used, but he indicated that there was something of a haze or peculiarity about the atmosphere that surrounded them but nothing that would prevent his having a clear vision and knowledge of all that took place. He declared [p. 150] to me that the testimony which he had published to the world was true and that he had never denied any part of it.

I asked him why he had left the Church. He replied that he had never left the Church, that he had continued with the branch of the Church that was originally organized in Richmond and still presided over it. In answer to my questions, he said, in an unqualified, emphatic way, that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God, but had become a fallen prophet through the influence which Sidney Rigdon exercised over him; that he accepted everything that was revealed to the Prophet down to the year 1835, but rejected everything thereafter because he did not know whether it came from the Lord or from Sidney Rigdon. He manifestly had become embittered against Sidney Rigdon, due to his promotion to second place in the Church over men like himself who had been with the Prophet from the beginning and who had done so much for the Church. I then concluded, as I now believe, that jealousy and disappointment had soured his soul, but nothing could obliterate his testimony of the divinity of the Book of Mormon.

I asked him about the manuscript from which the Book of Mormon was published. He said that he had the original of the three copies that were made before the Book of Mormon was printed. I asked him if he would sell the manuscript. He said no. I then asked him if he wouldn't sell it at any price. He said no, that he would not part with it. He also said, pointing to his home, that when a cyclone struck Richmond a few years before every room in his house was destroyed except the one in which that manuscript was kept. He seemed to regard the manuscript sacredly. As he appeared to be a poor man, at least in very ordinary circumstances, I was greatly impressed by the fact that he would not even talk about selling it and with the fact that he seemed to regard the care of the manuscript as being something of a sacred trust. Neither did he seek a reconciliation with the Church, although that would have inevitably increased his worldly comfort, and made him a highly honored personage among Latter-day Saints.

President Joseph F. Smith had previously interviewed him and had seen the manuscript. He said to me that it was not the original but one of the other two copies.[14]

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14. An editor's note reads: "Mention is here made of three manuscript

[*6. Address, 18 March 1945*][15]

... I am invited to speak about David Whitmer and the witnesses of the Book of Mormon. ... [p. 443] ...

I came home from that mission[16] and the following year went East to school. During that time I read in one of the local papers that David Whitmer was alive and had given a very interesting interview to a newspaperman which aroused my interest, and I determined that when I returned home I would see him if he were still living. ...

When I graduated from school I made my way to Richmond, Missouri, the last of June 1885. There was only one train a day in and out of that town. I therefore had to remain there during the night. It was a small town, something like our nice little country towns here in Utah, in a farming section of the country. There was a bus to meet the train, drawn by horses of course. I sat on the seat with the driver and there I began my investigation of David Whitmer, and continued [p. 444] it for one day. I talked with the driver. He said David Whitmer was a highly respected citizen of Richmond. I stopped at the local hotel and talked with the clerk; he gave me the same response, as did everyone I approached.

In the newspaper article which I mentioned, the statement was made that David Whitmer was pestered with curiosity seekers who had heard that he had seen an angel from Heaven; so I brought a nice little present for him to show I was really interested, and induced a friend of his to give me a favorable introduction.

We went to his home. It was a plain, simple little two-story building with one or two fruit trees in front of it, with no other ornamentation. We didn't have lawns here in those days. He was sitting in front of the house under a fruit tree in his shirt sleeves. I said to him that I was born in the Church. My mother was born in the early days of the Church in Illinois; that my father came to Utah in his teens. ... [p. 445]

I said that I grew up in the pioneer days of Utah, believing devotedly in my religion. I told him I had just graduated from the University of Michigan as a lawyer and was about to commence my life's work as he was preparing to lay his down. I begged of him to not let me go through life believing in a vital falsehood. Was his testimony as published in the Book of Mormon true? Was

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copies of the Book of Mormon. We know of only two such, the original and the printer's copy." See also n. 12 above.

15. Cook 1991, 164-70, uses the version published in the *Instructor;* the text here is from the original as transcribed by Sessions.

16. Moyle served a mission in North Carolina in the late 1870s.

there any possibility for him to have been deceived in any particular? His answer was unequivocal. That there was no question about its truthfulness. That the angel stood in a little clear space in the woods, with nothing between them but a fallen log, the angel on one side, the witnesses on the other. It was all in broad clear daylight; that he saw the plates and heard the angel with unmistakeable clearness, and there was nothing to prevent the same.

He was 80 years old, perfectly gray, serious minded, and beyond question sincere. His mind seemed perfectly clear. He moved about with freedom, and lived three years after with his mind normal.

I had just graduated in the law. He was the first witness I ever attempted to cross-examine, and I did so with all the intensity of my impelling desire to know the truth. The interview lasted two and a half hours. I exhausted all my resources, and he was very kind and willing to aid me.

There was only one thing that did not fully satisfy me. I had difficulty then as I have now to describe just what was unsatisfactory. I wrote in my diary immediately on my return home, that in describing the scene in the woods he was "somewhat spiritual in his explanations and not as materialistic as I wished." That was my description then and I cannot make it any clearer now. He said, "It was indescribable; that it was through the power of God." He then spoke of Paul hearing and seeing Christ, and his associates did not, because it is only seen in the spirit. [p. 446]

I asked if the atmosphere about them was normal. Then he said it was indescribable, but the light was bright and clear, yet apparently a different kind of light, something of a soft haze I concluded.

A few years before in an interview with President Joseph F. Smith and Apostle Orson Pratt,[17] they reported that he said it was more brilliant than that of the noonday sun.

I have wondered if there was a special significance, not clear to me, in the language used by the three witnesses in their testimony referring to the golden plates, "And they have been *shown* unto us by the *power* of God and not of man." The eight witnesses say the plates were shown unto them by Joseph Smith. That I call materialistic, the other spiritual, and I could not get anything more out of it. ...

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17. See VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878. On Orson Pratt (1811-81), see introduction to I.A.16, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1839.

26.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TRIBUNE*, 15 DECEMBER 1885

"The Book of Mormon. David Whitmer, the Associate of Joseph Smith, Now on His Death-Bed. He Describes the Translation of the Golden Tablets at Which He Assisted. The Angel in the Pasture—His Hatred of Polygamy—His Services in the Church," *Chicago Tribune,* 17 December 1885, 3; reprinted in the *Deseret Evening News* 19 (24 December 1885); and *Saints' Herald* 33 (2 January 1886): 12-14.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On 15 December 1885, a correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune* interviewed David Whitmer at his home. At the time, the aged Whitmer was confined to bed and was believed to be close to death. The interview should be read with caution since it contains some rather obvious inaccuracies. While some of the errors might be due to the interviewer, other errors probably resulted from the manner in which the session with Whitmer was conducted. The reporter states that the subject was too weak and feeble to relate the account personally; one of the family members, perhaps his son David J. Whitmer, gave a narration and the Book of Mormon witness himself occasionally interrupted when he felt it necessary to make a correction or comment. According to Nathan Tanner, Jr., who interviewed Whitmer on 13 April 1886, David J., with his father's approval, said "that the reporter of the Chicago Tribune was not ad=mitted to his room nor did he have the interview [that was] reported in the Tribune, (He said the reporter was in town and had talk[ed] with members of the family, but that he was not admitted to the sick man's room as a=leged and that the report was in other respects inaccurate, but his father did not wish to be always contradicting such reports and so let it pass)" (see VI.A.28, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH NATHAN TANNER, JR., 13 APR 1886).

RICHMOND, Mo., Dec. 15.—[Special Correspondence.]—David Whitmer, one of the founders of the Mormon Church, and a resident of this quaint and interesting village for almost a half century, lies at the point of death. At the family homestead are gathered the children, grandchildren, and

great-grandchildren of the dying patriarch, and beside his death-bed is the devoted woman who linked her life and fortune with his more than fifty years ago. When your correspondent called at the house today and was summoned into the bed-chamber where Father Whitmer was calmly awaiting the final summons, a smile lighted up the old man's countenance as he half rose and feebly pressed the visitor's hand, and then, as if overcome by the effort, his head sunk back on the pillows. When told of the visitor's mission and that he had journeyed from Chicago to prepare an historical sketch on one who had played so important a part in translating the Mormon Bible and proselyting for the Mormon Church, the request for information met with a cheerful response. Fearing, however, that the task would be too great, the family deputed a member of the household to relate the history in the presence of Father Whitmer, the narration being closely followed by him and subjected to frequent corrections and interpolations.

David Whitmer was born in Pennsylvania, January 6th, 1805. The photograph, from which the above likeness was engraved,[1] was taken four years ago and, as compared with a photograph taken in 1872, shows that he has aged rapidly during the last few years. The accompanying autograph was written today, while the dying man lay propped up on his pillows. "It is probably the last time this hand will ever grasp a pen," he remarked as he made the final stroke. While David was yet an infant his father,[2] who served his country through the Revolutionary War, removed with his family to Western New York and settled on a farm in Ontario County, near Watkins Glen. The father, who was a hard-working, God-fearing man, was a strict Presbyterian and brought his children up with rigid sectarian discipline. Besides a daughter, who married Oliver Cowdery,[3] the village school-master, there were four sons—Jacob,[4] John,[5] David, and Christian[6]—who helped their father till his farm until they had arrived at the age of manhood. During

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1. The article was accompanied by an engraving of the aged David Whitmer.

2. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

3. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), who married David's sister Elizabeth Ann Whitmer on 18 December 1832, see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

4. On Jacob Whitmer (1800-56), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 98.

5. On John Whitmer (1802-78), see "Introduction to John Whitmer Collection."

6. On Christian Whitmer (1798-1835), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 96.

the early part of June, 1829,[7] Oliver Cowdery incidentally learned that a young man named Joseph Smith had found a valuable golden treasure in the northern part of the county,[8] and imparted the information to David. They decided to investigate the rumor, and Cowdery traveled to the home of Smith for that purpose. On the road he found the community teeming with excitement over the alleged treasure, and heard several persons threaten to kill the finder unless he divided his wealth with them. When asked how they knew such a treasure had been found, several asserted that they had seen the receptacle from which it was taken by Smith.[9] Cowdery, assured that there was more to the vague rumors than he had at first believed, pushed on to the home of Smith, who was living on his father's farm near Manchester.[10] At first he found Smith inclined to be uncommunicative, but was finally permitted to view the treasure, and was greatly impressed by the sight. In fact his wonderment was so great that he at once wrote to David to come without delay.[11] David did so and was equally mystified.

The treasure consisted of a number of golden plates, about eight inches long and seven inches wide, about as thick as ordinary sheet-tin, and bound together in the form of a volume by three gold rings. A large portion of the volume was securely sealed, but on the loose pages were engraved hieroglyphics expressive of some language at that time unknown to any of the persons mentioned. Together with the golden tablets were a pair of spectacles, set in silver bows.

Mr. Whitmer then described Smith's story of the vision in which the location of the plates was revealed, with the history of the Nephites, Moroni's labor, and Smith's finding of the tablets, with which every one is familiar.

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7. This date is incorrect. Cowdery learned about Smith's plates in 1828 while boarding with the Smith family in Manchester, New York, then in April 1829 traveled to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to meet Joseph Smith. Afterwards Cowdery began sending letters to the Whitmers in Fayette, New York. In early June 1829, Whitmer helped move Smith and Cowdery to his father's home.

8. That is, in Manchester, Ontario County, New York.

9. For a similar statement, see VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881.

10. Rather, Cowdery went to visit Smith in Harmony, Pennsylvania.

11. Whitmer said in other interviews that he received three letters from Cowdery (see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878; and VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881).

TRANSLATING THE PLATES.

Whitmer and Cowdery were greatly impressed by the recital of this strange story, and were conducted to the hill, where they personally viewed the receptacle in which Moroni, at the beginning of the fifth century, had concealed the history of his fathers. Smith also said that he had been commanded to at once begin the translation of the work in the presence of three witnesses. In accordance with this command, Smith, Cowdery, and Whitmer proceeded to the latter's home, accompanied by Smith's wife,[12] and bearing with them the precious plates and spectacles. The house of the senior Whitmer was a primitive and poorly designed structure, but it was deemed the most secure for carrying out the sacred trust on account of the threats that had been made against Smith by his mercenary neighbors. In order to give privacy to the proceeding a blanket, which served as a portiere, was stretched across the family living room to shelter the translators and the plates from the eye of any who might call at the house while the work was in progress. This, Mr. Whitmer says, was the only use made of the blanket, and it was not for the purpose of concealing the plates or the translator from the eyes of the amanuensis.[13] In fact, Smith was at no time hidden from his collaborators, and the translation was performed in the presence of not only the persons mentioned, but of the entire Whitmer household and several of Smith's relatives besides.

The work of translating the tablets consumed about eight months,[14] Smith acting as the seer and Oliver Cowdery, Smith's wife, and Christian Whitmer, brother of David, performing the duties of amanuenses, in whose handwriting the original manuscript now is. Each time before resuming the work all present would kneel in prayer and invoke the Divine blessing on the proceeding. After prayer Smith would sit on one side of a table and the aman-

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12. In another interview, Whitmer reportedly stated that Emma Smith arrived at Fayette shortly after their arrival (VI.A.17, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEWS WITH JAMES H. HART, 21 AUG 1883 & 10 MAR 1884). On Emma Hale Smith (1804-79), see "Introduction to Emma Smith Collection."

13. Whitmer repeatedly testified that the plates were not present during the translation. Nevertheless, Nathan Tanner remembered Whitmer saying that "Joseph was separated from the scribe by a blanket" (VI.A.28, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH NATHAN TANNER, JR., 13 APR 1886). Whitmer emphasized visibility of the translator to combat the speculation that "Joseph Smith ... read the Spaulding manuscript from behind a blanket to Oliver Cowdery, his amanuensis, who wrote it down" (VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 10).

14. The translation took about three months from 7 April to about 1 July 1829.

uenses, in turn as they became tired, on the other. Those present and not actively engaged in the work seated themselves around the room and then the work began. After affixing the magical spectacles to his eyes, Smith would take the plates and translate the characters one at a time.[15] The graven characters would appear in succession to the seer, and directly under the character, when viewed through the glasses, would be the translation in English. Sometimes the character would be a single word, and frequently an entire sentence. In translating the characters Smith, who was illiterate and but little versed in Biblical lore, was ofttimes compelled to spell the words out, not knowing the correct pronunciation, and Mr. Whitmer recalls the fact that at that time Smith did not even know that Jerusalem was a walled city.[16] Cowdery, however, being a school-teacher, rendered invaluable aid in pronouncing hard words and giving their proper definition.

MORE MIRACULOUS DEVELOPMENTS.

A miracle is related by Mr. Whitmer as occurring while the translation was in progress. It seems that Smith, who was puffed up with his great importance as a confidential secretary to the Lord, displeased the Master by entering into some carnal confab in relation to the work. For this offense he was punished by having the celestial visitant, who first commissioned him to inaugurate the work, suddenly appear and carry off the plates and spectacles. In this connection it might also be mentioned that Martin Harris,[17] one of the witnesses to the translation, a farmer in the same county and a man of simple mind and taste, was sent by Smith with a copy of the characters to Prof. Charles Anthon,[18] a professor of languages in Columbia College and author of several well-known works, who pronounced the language inscribed on the plates Reformed Egyptian.[19]

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15. Joseph Smith was never seen wearing the spectacles with the plates before him. Initially a blanket concealed him from his scribe, but this method was quickly abandoned. Thereafter he translated in full view, placing the seer stone in a hat and dictating without use of the plates.

16. See VI.A.3, DAVID WHITMER WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* AUG 1875. Whitmer's anecdote about Jerusalem originates with Emma Smith (see I.F.1, EMMA SMITH BIDAMON INTERVIEW WITH EDMUND C. BRIGGS, 1856).

17. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

18. On Charles Anthon (1797-1867), see introduction to V.D.1, CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834.

19. However, see V.D.2, CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834; and V.D.3, CHARLES ANTHON TO THOMAS WINTHROP COIT, 3 APR 1841.

About this time Harris, inspired by curiosity and elation, took sixteen of the golden tablets home to show his wife, who is alleged to have stolen them from a bureau drawer and peddled them among her friends.[20] For this offense Harris was severely reprimanded by the Lord, through Smith, but the angel afterwards recovered the plates and restored them. Smith's offense of tattling the secrets of the work among his neighbors was less readily condoned, and for a long time the work was suspended, the angel being in possession of the plates and spectacles. Finally, when Smith had fully repented of his rash conduct, he was forgiven. The plates, however, were not returned, but instead Smith was given by the angel a Urim and Thummim of another pattern, it being shaped in oval or kidney form. This seer's stone he was instructed to place in his hat, and on covering his face with the hat the characters and translation would appear on the stone.

This worked just as satisfactorily as the old method, but at no time thereafter was the backsliding Joseph intrusted with the precious plates. However, the entire portion of the golden volume, which the angel said might be translated, was reduced by the nimble amanuenses to readable manuscript. The other installment was withheld until the Lord could discover what effect the first had on the Gentiles. That He was not pleased with the result is manifested by the fact that the sealed portion has not yet been delivered to the world.

THE ANGEL IN THE PASTURE.

After the translation was completed Smith informed Cowdery, Whitmer and Harris that the Lord had instructed him that the time was at hand when they should testify to all nations, tongues and people concerning this work. These four Apostles of the Lord, as they were designated, accordingly assembled in a pasture, cleared of underbrush, at a point equally distant between two public highways. About the noonday hour they were seated on a log waiting for the promised manifestation, having previously knelt in prayer. All at once the heavens seemed to open and there appeared a dazzling shaft of light, beside which the light of the sun appeared dim. Through this cleft in the sky, which seemed to lead way up to the pearly gates beyond, appeared an angel, disguised as a man, bearing the semblance of a table. The angel descended to the earth, landing nearly at their feet. On this table were the

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20. Rather, it was said that in June 1828 Harris took 116 pages of original manuscript, which his wife stole and probably burned (see III.L.16, BOOK OF MORMON PREFACE, 1829). W. R. Hine reported the error that Lucy Harris gave the manuscript to others (see IV.D.10, WILLIAM R. HINE STATEMENT, CIRCA MAR 1885).

plates of gold from which they had just translated the Book of Mormon, and the plates of brass on which were inscribed the commandments written by Moses and which had been taken from Jerusalem by Nephi 600 years before Christ and afterwards transported to America. The four Apostles were then commanded to go forth among men and preach religion as set down in the Book of Mormon.

After this wonderful manifestation Martin Harris mortgaged his farm for $1,500 in order to obtain funds for printing the Book of Mormon, and all four set about founding a church, which was called the Church of Christ, as commanded in the Book of Mormon. The four Apostles began preaching, and were so successful in securing converts to the new religion that a church was organized April 6th, 1830. The Book of Mormon was also given to the world that year. Concerning the converts Mr. Whitmer says that among the first adherents to embrace the new faith were many of the most intellectual and refined men and women in that locality, and the ranks were not recruited from the ignorant and sensuous classes like the Mormons of Utah. The year following the organization of the church the disciples moved to Ohio, where they had been most successful in proselyting, and a temple was erected at Kirtland. It was at this place that Sidney Rigdon[21] and Brigham Young[22] joined the church, and it was here that the first dissensions occurred.

Concerning Sidney Rigdon, who is said to have stolen the manuscript of the Book of Mormon, which, it was alleged, had been written by a Presbyterian preacher named Solomon Spaulding, and originally intended as a romance, Mr. Whitmer asserts that nothing could have been more improbable, as neither Smith, himself, or the other disciples ever knew Rigdon until they moved to Ohio.

HE KEPT THE RECORDS.

The original manuscript from which the Book of Mormon was printed is still in Mr. Whitmer's possession and most of it is in the handwriting of his brother Christian and his brother-in-law, Oliver Cowdery.[23] Mr. Whitmer also has an exhaustive history of the church, which was compiled by his

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21. On Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), see introduction to I.A.13, SIDNEY RIGDON ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1836.

22. On Brigham Young (1801-77), see introduction to III.K.19, BRIGHAM YOUNG ACCOUNTS, 1855 & 1857.

23. According to Royal Skousen's recent research, most of the writing in the printer's manuscript is in Oliver Cowdery's hand, a small portion having been contributed by Hyrum Smith and an unknown scribe (Skousen 2001, 9-10).

brother,[24] and an accurate copy of several plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated.[25] These records he has preserved against all temptations and in the face of death. Several years ago a delegation of Mormons came to Richmond from Salt Lake and made every overture to Mr. Whitmer in a vain attempt to gain possession of the records, but he stood aloof and declined every offer.[26] A prominent businessman of the place, at that time engaged in banking, informed your correspondent that he knows of his own knowledge that the Mormon Church would have willingly paid Mr. Whitmer $100,000 for the documents, and that the delegation returned home thoroughly convinced that Mr. Whitmer was proof against all financial temptation so far as concerned his records. ...[27]

A GOOD CITIZEN.

As a citizen of Richmond he stands deservedly high, having filled the office of Mayor and Councilman. Upright in his dealings with men and just towards all, he has progressed gradually with the country until he and his children and their children have secured good business standing and are regarded among the best citizens of Ray County.

Of those who took part in the original translation, Joseph Smith was shot by a mob in 1844, Oliver Cowdery died in this county thirty years ago, leaving a wife and daughter, both of whom are yet living and reside in Silver City, Mo. John Whitmer, a prosperous farmer, died at Far West in 1878, leaving children and grandchildren. Jacob Whitmer passed away many years ago, and his son, John C., a white-haired elder of the Church of Christ, continues to preach the religion of his father in and about Richmond.

David Whitmer has two children, a son and daughter. The son, David J.,[28] is without issue. The daughter, Mrs. Julius Schweich, resides here and is the mother of two children, both of whom have children. George, the eldest of Mrs. Schweich's children, is a shrewd businessman and is associated with his uncle, David J. Whitmer, in the livery business. His [George's] sister,

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24. This refers to John Whitmer's history (see VI.B.1, JOHN WHITMER HISTORY, 1831).

25. See V.E.2, BOOK OF MORMON CHARACTERS, DEC 1827-FEB 1828.

26. See VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878.

27. Material unrelated to pre-Ohio Mormonism deleted (see Cook 1991, 177-79).

28. On David Whitmer, Jr., see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 5.

Josie, is the wife of J. R. Van Cleve,[29] private secretary to the Collector of Customs at Chicago.

RICHMOND, Mo., Dec. 16—[Special.]—David Whitmer, who lies at the point of death, had a sinking spell this afternoon and is not expected to last until morning.[30]

29. On James R. B. Van Cleave (1853-?), husband of Josephine Helen Schweich, see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 9.

30. Whitmer recovered from this illness and lived another three years.

27.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 9 FEBRUARY 1886

1. Edward Stevenson, Journal, 24:30-37, entry of 9 February 1886, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
2. Edward Stevenson to Daniel H. Wells, 16 February 1886, *Millennial Star* 48 (8 March 1886): 155-56.
3. Edward Stevenson to the Editor, 2 March 1886, *Utah Journal* (Ogden, Utah), 10 March 1886, 3.
4. Edward Stevenson, "The Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon," *Millennial Star* 48 (12 July 1886): 436-38.

EDITORIAL NOTE

See introduction to VI.A.5, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 22-23 DEC 1877.

[*1. Journal, 9 February 1886*]

[Tuesday] 9: 7:15 A.M. Call[ed] on David Whitmer[.] 8 years ago I visited him & now again[.] he is 81 & very feeble I had to stop him [from] talking to rest as I [could] see it [p. 30] was hurting him[.] about 11 [A.M.] he had to lie down & rest. I then talked with David Jr[1] very seriously about 2 [h]ours; Father Whitmer Showed me the old manuscript in several diferent hand writeings also the 7 or 8 lines of charectors that Martin Harris[2] took to Anthony [Charles Anthon] of N.Y.[3] ... Meny Incidents he related over [again] that he did on my last visit. ... [p. 31]

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1. On David Whitmer, Jr., see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 5.

2. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

3. Stevenson later recalled that while exhibiting the facsimile of Book of Mormon characters, Whitmer said: "This is the very identical copy that Martin [Harris] presented to Professor [Charles] Anthon, and was copied directly from the golden plates" (cited in J. G. Stevenson 1955, 1:179). See also V.E.2, BOOK OF MORMON CHARACTERS, DEC 1827-FEB 1828. On Charles Anthon

Now as 8 years ago he [Whitmer] Says ["]as I live and Stand upon the earth so shure did I see the Angle who Stood before us. while we were sitting upon a log[,] that is Joseph & I <& Oliver Cowdry>[4] we were talking when a bright light began to Shine around us it grew brighter & brighter untill an Angle Stood before us[.] a table [was] in front of him on which was the [Gold] Plates and the other Plates[,] the Sword of Laben[,] Ball or Compass &c. the plates were shown [to] us [and the] leaves turned over[.] a portion of them were sealed. We also he[a]rd a voice commanding us to bear a testamony of these things to the World &c &c—["]

He also relates to me that previous to Joseph Coming [p. 33] to him[,] only a short time [before] while he was plowing in the field[,] he he[a]rd a voice and saw a personage[.] the voice Said ["]Blessed is the name of the Lord & they who keep his commandments["] Soon after which Joseph came along & said ["]David you are chosen to be one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon.["] he left his team tied up to the fence & they went through a clearing & into the edge of the Woods & sat upon the log as spoken of above.

He also relates a little very interesting Incident that occurred in June 1829, David, Oliver, & Joseph, were riding from Harmony[,] Pa.— the 2 former in front & [p. 34] Joseph [in] back sitting in the bed on hay or straw[.] David had bin down with his team over 100 miles to fetch Joseph up to his mothers to translate the Book of Mormon about 2 1/2 days drive. while thus rideing an aged looking old man came walking along putting his hand on the wagon bed, he had on his back a knapsack & the Strap crossed on his breast[.] he took his handkerchief and wiped his face to remove the sweat as it Seemed to them[.] David who was driveing his team said to the man ["]will you get up and ride[?"] ["]no["] said he ["]I am only going over to Comorah["] & Suddenly disappeared they stop[p]ed the team [p. 35] amazed at the Sudden disapearance of the fine looking stranger[.] he says that they all felt so strangely—

that they asked the Prophet to enquire of the Lord who this stranger was. Soon David said they turned around & Joseph looked pale almost transparent & said that [he] was one of the Nephites, and he had the Plates of the Book of Mormon in the knapsac[k]—

After their arival home the[y] felt the influence of this same personage around them for he said thare was a Heavenly feeling with this Nephite.

Mother Whitmer Said and told them that She had see[n] this same man

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(1797-1867), see introduction to V.D.1, CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834.

4. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

the Nephite & he showed her the Plates and [p. 36] that a portion of them were Sealed together. This was a great privalige to her but She was good to Joseph the Prophet and here was her reward. David delighted to relate meny of those incidents. But as to Peter James & John Comeing to Joseph & Confering the Priesthood upon him he is ignorant of it[.] he Says that the Lord commanded and that is all. But here he is in the dark.[5] ... [p. 37]

[*2. Letter to Daniel H. Wells, 16 February 1886*]

New York City, Feb. 16, 1886.

President D[aniel]. H. Wells.[6]

Dear Brother—I have had the pleasure of calling at Independence, Jackson County, Mo., and visiting friends and looking over the sacred temple lot, selected by our honored Prophet Joseph Smith. ...

After my visit to Independence I took a run down to Lexington Junction, 42 miles from Kansas City and up the Lexington Railroad five miles to Richmond, Ray County, Mo., and called on David Whitmer, desiring to see once more the only surviving witness of the visitation of the angel who commanded him with others to bear record of the truth of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and this Gospel dispensation of the nineteenth century. Eight years ago I visited him, and 52 [p. 155] years ago I heard him bear his testimony, as also Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris, when I was only a boy 14 years of age, and I am a witness that each time their testimony has been by the power of God, that thrills through the whole system like a two-edged sword. David Whitmer is now just past 81 years of age, and only by a hair's breadth has escaped from a death bed. He is very feeble, his frame

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5. Stevenson elaborated on this in a letter to Apostle Franklin D. Richards, 12 February 1886: "David [Whitmer] ... said many things [that] were not to go out to the world. ... I enquired of David [Whitmer] and young David [Whitmer, Jr.]; also of Philander A. Page, aged fifty-four, son of Hiram Page, one of the eight witnesses; also John [Whitmer], in whose hands the records are; all (and separately) who say that they do not have any knowledge of, neither do the records show, concerning Peter, James, and John's coming to the prophet Joseph. On this and also on John the Baptist's mission, they seem, all of them, very ignorant. David said the Prophet of God received the command from God, and that was sufficient authority. He did not seem to understand the necessity of the connecting link of ordinations" (original in LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah, cited J. G. Stevenson 1955, 1:177-78).

6. On Daniel H. Wells (1814-91), second counselor to Brigham Young (1857-77) and president of the British Mission (1864-65, 1885-87), see Jenson 1971, 1:62-66, 4:230.

weighing less than one hundred pounds. In this his last testimony, he said to me, "As sure as the sun shines and I live, just so sure did the angel appear unto me and Joseph Smith, and I heard his voice, and did see the angel standing before us, and on a table were the plates, the sword of Laban, and the ball or compass," and although so weak and feeble, yet he fired up, so that after a time I was necessarily obliged to check him and let him rest, while in turn I talked to him. I was kindly received and entertained from 7:30 a.m. until 2 p.m., and it gave me much pleasure to ask a blessing at the dinner table of this last surviving witness, and to see his continued firmness. A son of Hiram Page,[7] one of the eight witnesses, also dined with us.

I remain, &c.,
EDWARD STEVENSON

[*3. Letter to the* Utah Journal, *2 March 1886*]

EDITOR JOURNAL:—I believe the last you heard from me the Cannon Ball Railroad train was running away with me with lightning speed. Well, the ball struck the Lexington Junction, where I took a slower coach, 5 miles, 47 miles in all, and lodged at the Hugins House.

Tuesday morning, 9th. after an early breakfast, I called on David Whitmer. It was 8 years since my last visit to him, and the change in him is very perceptible. A few months previous, he was at death's door, but, as he said to me, his time had not come.

About 7:30 a.m., soon after breakfast I called on the venerable old gentleman, who has just turned 81 years of age. The first to meet me was the colored servants, both male and female. ...

Well, those domestics very courteously invited me into the domicile, and the genial presence of David Whitmer, and I was, as on my former visit, cordially received. But what a change 8 years had made in him, now feeble and so emaciated that his frame would weigh, he said, less than 100 lbs. But when it came to his testimony of the visitation of the angel, and other incidents of those early times, he fired up and manifested a zeal and power so positive that it seemed to take him right back to into the presence of the angel. His testimony was undeviating from that which I had from him 52 years ago, and also 8 years past. He stated to me that, while he was in his field plowing, he heard a voice and saw a personage who said, "Blessed is the name of the Lord, and they who keep His commandments." While reflecting on this subject still plowing, the Prophet came along and told David that he was chosen

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7. Probably Philander Page.

to be one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon. He tied his team up to the fence and proce[e]ded with the Prophet across an opening or clearing into the edge of the woods and there, Joseph, Oliver and David, sat upon a log talking upon the coming forth of this work, when a light began to shine around them, and it increased in lustre until a heavenly messenger appeared before them, and before him was a table on which was placed the plates of the Book of Mormon, ball and compass, and other things. The leaves of the plates were shown to them, and a voice from the heavens declared those things to be true, and they were commanded to bear testimony of them to the world.

David Whitmer was so feeble that I was compelled to check him occasionally, lest he become exhausted. He said as sure as the sun shone, and he stood upon the earth he did see the angel and hear his voice.

I thought this would be one more additional testimony of the last one of the living witnesses who has one foot in the grave.

In a few minutes 6 of us will be out to sea.

E.S.

New York, March 2, 1886.

[*4. Reminiscence, 1886*]

DAVID Whitmer, the only surviving witness of the three, residing now in Richmond, Ray Co., Missouri, is in the 82nd year of his age. My first acquaintance with him was fifty-three years ago in [Pontiac] Michigan,[8] where he with the others related the vision of the angel and the showing of the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the ball or compass used in the wilderness by the Nephites, as they journeyed from Jerusalem. ... [p. 436] ... Brother Whitmer said to see these things, and to hear the voice of heavenly Beings testify to the correct translation of the plates, and commanding them as witnesses to testify of these things to the world, was marvelous to them. Nevertheless he knew that he did see and hear in open daylight.

I felt then, although only 13 years of age, (and I do more particularly now in my riper years, for I am past 66,) that I was very much favored and blessed of the Lord to see and hear those men, and to have been favored so much since that time by being in their company so often.

In 1836 I met David Whitmer in Far West, Caldwell Co., Mo., and his

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8. In October 1834, the three Book of Mormon witnesses and others accompanied Joseph Smith to Pontiac, Michigan (see I.A.9, JOSEPH SMITH RECITAL TO PONTIAC [MI] SAINTS, OCT 1834).

testimony was still unchanged. ... At the time of the Missouri troubles Brother David located where he lives now, and, thank God, he never has faltered in the trust reposed in him. During the intervening time I have visited him twice, once nearly nine years ago [1877], when I spent ten hours with him in three sittings, and again last February [1886], when I remained from early breakfast until two p.m., having dinner with him. ...

David Whitmer's experience in the outset as a witness was somewhat [p. 437] different from that of the other two. On the morning of the Sunday that he was called to be one of the witnesses, he went into his field to plow, and while so doing he heard a voice and saw a personage who said, "Blessed is the name of the Lord, and they who keep his commandments." Soon after this the Prophet Joseph came to him, calling him to go with him and Oliver Cowdery to be one of the three witnesses. He fastened his team to a fence, and they proceeded through a clearing to the edge of the woods and then sat upon a log. They were speaking regarding the great work of the Lord, when a bright light shone around them which increased in lustre until an angel stood before them. Then David said the angel took the book of plates and turned over leaf after leaf, except a portion which was sealed by rings of gold *not* yet translated, but to yet be translated in the due time of the Lord. The angel, he said, proclaimed that the translation from those plates into the Book of Mormon was correct, and had been done by the power of God, and that they were chosen to be especial witnesses of the same, and of the vision to all the world as found recorded in the fore part of the Book of Mormon. ...

My last visit with David was enjoyed exceedingly. Although he was very feeble, yet he was strong in his testimony, and is delighted to exhibit the manuscript copy of the Book of Mormon, and the copy of [the] characters exhibited to Professor Anthon.

EDWARD STEVENSON.

28.
David Whitmer Interview with Nathan Tanner, Jr., 13 May 1886

1. Nathan Tanner, Jr., Journal, 13 May 1886, [50-61], LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
2. Nathan Tanner, Jr., to Nathan A. Tanner, 17 February 1909, typed copy, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.[1]

EDITORIAL NOTE

Nathan Tanner, Jr. (1845-1919), was born at Montrose, Lee County, Iowa. He immigrated to Utah in 1848 with his parents, Nathan and Rachel Smith Tanner, and settled in South Cottonwood, Salt Lake County. After his marriage to Margaret G. Harrington, he located in Ogden where he practiced law. In 1884-85 he served as a missionary to the southern states. During the latter part of his life, he moved to Blackfoot, Idaho, then to Springfield, Idaho, where he later died (Jenson 1971, 3:536-37).

On 13 May 1886, Tanner visited David Whitmer in Richmond, Missouri, and interviewed him. Below is Tanner's account of the interview recorded at the time in his diary, followed by another account written on 17 February 1909 at the request of his son, Nathan Amasa Tanner (b. 1870) of Ogden.

[*1. Journal, 13 May 1886*][2]

Thursday 13, Took stage for Lexing=ton Junction paying 75 cents for four miles, then took train to Richmond and [p. 50] after leaving my baggage at the Hotel near the depot went to the home of David Whitmer. I was met at the door by his son David John[,] a man I should say of 45 years of age. I enquired if Father Whitmer was within and be=ing answered in the affirmative

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1. An amalgamation of the above sources was published in the *Instructor* 80 (October 1945): 469-71.

2. The organization of Tanner's small notebook journal is occasionally confusing, leading Lyndon W. Cook to misdate Tanner's interview with Whitmer to 13 April 1886, which was a Tuesday (Cook 1991, 187). The correct date is Thursday, 13 May 1886.

asked when I could see him, and was ans=wered that it would be as convenient then as at any time. I was invited in and seated and he [p. 51] Calling the old gentleman in was informed that I could not be gratified with a lengthy talk upon the question of his testimony and the history of the transla=tion, Church history &c as the calls upon him were too numer=ous and taxing upon his enfeebled condi=tion physically to admit of this.

The old gentleman was then called in and arising I in=troduced myself stating that I had come from Kansas City to see the man [p. 52] who had been so favored of God as to have been visited by an Angel and to have handled the golden plates (My recollection was at the time that his=tory said he did handle them)

after an exchange of friendly greetings and a few words about his physical health in which his son said (and he I think assented) that the reporter of the Chicago Tribune was not ad=mitted to his room nor did he have the interview reported in the Tribune, (He said the reporter was in town and had talk[ed] with members of the family, [p. 53] but that he was not admitted to the sick mans room as a=ledged and that the report was in other respects in accurate, but his father did not wish to be always contradicting such reports and so let it pass) I asked him if the table, which the angel brought, and upon which the plates lay when he viewed them was a tangible one, and he said that he did not touch it, it had the semblance of a table. He then ex=plained that he saw the plates and with his natural eyes, but he [p. 54] had to be prepared for it—that he and the other witnesses were overshadowed by the power of God and a halo of brightness indescribable.[3]

I then asked him if he ever handled the plates and he said that he did not at any time. I refer=red to his going down after Joseph and Em=ma[4] to bring the plates <and> them to his fathers, and he said the plates were not in the wagon nor did he see them or at all during the trans=lation. <He said Joseph and [-] Oliver[5] and Emma told him about the plates and discribed them to him and he believed them but did not [—] at the time testified of> He said they were in the possession of the Angel during this time. [p. 55]

The manuscript by re=quest, said to be the origi=nal manuscript in the

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3. Whitmer similarly told James Henry Moyle that "it was indescribable, but the light was bright and clear, yet apparently a different kind of light, something of a soft haze I [Moyle] concluded" (VI.A.25, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH JAMES HENRY MOYLE, 28 JUN 1885).

4. On Emma Hale Smith (1804-79), see "Introduction to Emma Smith Collection."

5. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

handwriting of Oliver [Cowdery][,] Emma and Christian Whitmer[6] was brought out and untied being wrapped in a sheet of brown wrapping pa=per (or between a brown and buff the paper was) and being laid upon the table I examined the sheets as many as I chose also the scrap of paper containing the characters which were submitted by Martin Harris[7] to Prof Anthon[8] and the certificate of the clerk of the <U.S.> District [p. 56] Court of the <Northern> District of New York showing that Joseph had deposite=d the title of the book with him claiming to be its author[.] The clerks name was R R Lansing[9]

He affirmed his testimony as given to the Book of Mormon both that he viewed the plates and that the record was true according to the tes=timony of the Angel and I was under the impression as he talked that he had at some time claimed to have handled the plates but I thought that possibly I might have been mistaken [p. 57] and as he exhibited evidences of much de=bility I did not call his attention to it.

I had a pleasant chat of perhaps half an hour. ... [p. 58] ...

Young David said that the preachers and many of the noble men of the earth [p. 60] had viewed the M.S.S. [manuscripts] and that they expressed themselves as feeling a reverential awe upon the occasion.

I subsequently had a lengthy chat with David John[10] upon his fathers relation to the Church &c and upon the M.S.S. [manuscripts] and His statement is that they were in O[liver] Cowderys possession and at his death were turned over to his Father for safe keeping and have ever since been in his possession. In the evening I took the cars for Kansas City and put up at the Lindell Hotel. [p. 61]

[*2. Letter to Nathan A. Tanner, 17 February 1909*]

[Blackfoot, Idaho]
17 February 1909

Nathan A. Tanner,
Ogden. [Utah]

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6. On Christian Whitmer (1798-1835), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 96.

7. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

8. On Charles Anthon (1797-1867), see introduction to V.D.1, CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834.

9. See III.L.12, BOOK OF MORMON COPYRIGHT, 11 JUN 1829.

10. On David Whitmer, Jr., see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTER-

Dear Nathan A;

Complying to your request to write an account of my visit to David Whitmer, I looked for my diary of that date, but, to my surprise I can not find it, so I will write from memory of the incident which occurred in May 1886[11]—nearly twenty two years ago.

I went from Independence[,] Missouri to Richmond, with a view of seeing David Whitmer, and upon alighting from the cars at Richmond, the town of his residence, I enquired where he lived. A son of his who kept a hotel in the town heard me, and possibly guessing who I was said to a man sitting on the front seat of the coach, and loud enough that I heard him, "there is a man who wants to see my father, and I will see that he does not see him" or words to that effect.

Being directed to where I could find the house where David Whitmer dwelt, I immediately went there and knocked and the son that I had seen on the coach, or hotel bus, answered the knock and opening the door stood in it, but did not invite me in, and I enquired if that was David Whitmers residence, and being answered in the affirmative said I was passing through the place, and had called with a view of seeing him. His son said that his father was sick and could not be seen. I felt that the excuse was made simply to prevent me seeing David, and that his father might be seen if he chose to allow it, and I prayed fervently but silently that the man might relent, and knowing that newspaper men often bothered him, and did not always report him fairly, I said, "I am not a reporter, I am simply passing this way and desired to see the man who has been so highly favored of the Lord as his father had been" and added that his father need not talk, but if I could see him and shake his hand, I should feel satisfied, and favored. The man then invited me in and said that he would go and see if his father felt well enough to be seen. He retired and in a few minutes reappeared and said "sit still, father will be out in a few minutes."

In a few minutes David appeared, a very feeble and stooped, but pleasant looking gentleman, and I arose and took his extended hand saying as I did so that I was very greatly pleased to have seen him; and that as he was in feeble health he need not talk, but I would be satisfied with the pleasure of his personal acquaintance.

He bid me sit down however, and began to talk and continued I should judge for a half or three quarters of an hour. He related the story of his first

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VIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 5.

11. Tanner's journal entry is dated 13 May 1886 (see n. 2 above).

hearing of Joseph, of the angels, or some other persons putting his grain in order that he might go to the Prophet. He said that he had concluded to go as soon as he could put in that field of grain, and he thought of course that it was planted for him, in order that he might go the sooner.

He related the history of his travel to and meeting the Prophet whom, he said, had seen him coming in vision, and had walked out to meet him on the way, and knew him when they met. He said that the Prophet told him where he stayed en route. How he had seen him reading a sign,—I think it was a hotel sign, and he told him so many things which he could not know only by inspiration, that he (David) could not doubt the divinity of his mission.[12] David then went on and told me, in a general way, the whole history of his relations with the Prophet. About the way the translation was accomplished; about seeing the plates, etc.

He said that Joseph was separated from the scribe, by a blanket as I remember[13]; that he had the Urim and Thummim, and a chocolate colored stone, which he used alternately, as suited his convenience, and he said that he believed Joseph could as well [have] accomplished the translation by looking in to a hat, or in to any other stone, as by the use of the Urim, or the chocolate colored stone. David expressed absolute faith in the Prophets power to get any information he desired, and by any means he should adopt for the purpose. I mean he appeared to have absolute faith in Josephs power with God, to get any information he wished for. And he did not think that either the Urim or the stone he had were essential, or absolutely essential to the obtaining of the information.

He said that Joseph would—as I remember—place the manuscript beneath the stone or Urim, and the characters would appear in English, which he would spell out, and they would remain there until the word was fully written and corrected, when it would disappear and another word appear, etc.

With reference to having seen the plates, he said they were brought in and laid upon a table by an angel, who turned the leaves over for their inspection, and that a voice from heaven spoke and said that the record was a true one and that it was correctly translated. He also told of seeing the breastplate

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12. Cf. VI.A.17, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEWS WITH JAMES H. HART, 21 AUG 1883 & 10 MAR 1884; and VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878.

13. This use of the blanket was reportedly denied by Whitmer on another occasion (see VI.A.26, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TRIBUNE,* 15 DEC 1885).

and sword of Laban, and, as I remember, the Urim and Thummim, which were a little way off, and in a receptacle which held them. A peculiar feature of the man was that[,] from a feeble old man when he commenced his testimony, he began to be magnified in my eyes untill he was as fine a specimen of humanity as I ever saw. It was unnecessary in my case, but I felt as I saw him with the effects of the spirit upon him, that that was his special mission, and that when performing it, God took him in hand and made his testimony effective. I felt that no person could see him and hear his testimony as I did, and doubt it, any more than David could doubt the divinity of Josephs mission when they met under the circumstances of their meeting. And David said he could not doubt it.

After talking as he did, so fully and freely he said "I have been asked if we saw those things with our natural eyes. Of course they were our natural eyes. There is no doubt that our eyes were prepared for the sight, but they were our natural eyes nevertheless."

I asked him if the table was a tangible one, and he said it appeared to be, but they did not touch it. After his testimony about the plates, his son asked if he should bring out the manuscript, and he assented, where upon they were brought out, and examined and explained. Our conversation did not touch upon his relations to the Church.

Love to all,
N. Tanner Jr

Post script.

As I close this letter Lyman[14] calls my attention to the fact that the copy that was submitted to Prof Anthon was marked "Caractors" showing Josephs illiteracy, and that he could not, for want of scholarship have written the book with out inspiration.

Lyman has a call to take a mission to the Eastern States, to start in April.

Love to all,
N. Tanner Jr

14. Probably Tanner's son, Lyman Greenwell Tanner (1888-?) (M. Tanner 1942, 95, 262).

29.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *OMAHA* (NE) *HERALD*, 10 OCTOBER 1886

"Revelations. A Flood of Light Upon a Much Disputed Point of Mormon Faith. Extraordinary Privileges Granted a Herald Correspondent By David Whitmer, Who Was One of the Original 'Three Witnesses' to Prophet Smith's Discoveries. ... Interesting Statements Made By Mr. Whitmer Concerning the Manner in Which Revelations Were Made to Order," *Omaha* (NE) *Herald* 22 (17 October 1886): 4. Simultaneously released to various dailies, including the *Des Moines Daily News,* 16 October 1886; *Chicago Inter-Ocean,* 17 October 1886; *Salt Lake City Daily Tribune,* 17 October 1886; and *Philadelphia Press,* 17 October 1886; and reprinted in the *Saints' Herald* 33 (13, 20 November 1886): 705-708, 721-25.[1]

EDITORIAL NOTE

On or about 10 October 1886,[2] David Whitmer was interviewed at his home in Richmond, Missouri, by D. C. Dunbar, representing the *Omaha Herald.* In a letter to James Henry Moyle of Salt Lake City from Glendale, California, 15 February 1933, Dunbar related the circumstances of his interview with Whitmer:

> ... I went down to Richmond, Mo. as a representative of the Omaha Herald. Doctor Miller, Editor and co-owner of this leading daily newspaper, had always taken an interest in the Mormon question and had read a press despatch which stated that Mr. Whitmer was seriously ill, and that he was "The last surviving witness of the Book of Mormon." My office was next

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1. The interview may also have been published in the *Plattsburg Democrat* (see VI.A.35, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *RICHMOND DEMOCRAT,* JAN 1888), but the incomplete files of the *Democrat* prevent verification.

2. Although Dunbar considered himself a representative of the *Omaha Herald,* he evidently sent copies of his interview to various dailies for simultaneous release. The *Herald* bears the dateline of 10 October, while the *Salt Lake Daily Tribune, Philadelphia Press,* and *Des Moines Daily News* have 9 October. The possibility therefore exists that the interview occurred on 9 October rather than the 10th and that the different dates represent differences in the postmarks.

to Doctor Miller's, and he showed me the item mentioned and suggested that I was the right man to secure an interview with Whitmer for the Herald— he believed it would be a splendid thing for the reading public.

I went down to Richmond with the necessary credentials, and after some effort, met Mr. Whitmer, and got an interview which appeared in the Herald, later, occupying the entire front page of the paper. Doctor Miller also published, in the same issue, an editorial in which he paid me some compliments.

Mr. Whitmer, when he was assured that I would print only the thing he approved (he told me some things not for publication) gave me a complete history of his connection with the Church and of his seeing the angel and handling the plates etc. He never hinted even that he had been deceived nor that his mind had undergone any change respecting the divine origin of Joseph Smith's mission. He did say, however, that the prophet gradually began to receive revelations upon any trivial matters as were brought to his attention. In other words he (Whitmer) thought that the prophet had slipped in a way. This I did not publish. My own deduction was that Whitmer had, perhaps, slipped himself a little. ...

Before I left Omaha to return to Salt Lake in 1890, David Whitmer, through his secretary, wrote me a request that I undertake the writing of his life's history for publication in book form. I was obliged to decline the request, because I was too busy at the time. He had been pleased with the way I wrote the interview. He had had some disappointing interviews with newspaper reporters and had, for some years, refused to be interviewed. My own impression was that he was absolutely honest and sincere in his statements. And I was left to wonder whether he had drifted away from his convictions or whether he had concluded that this wonderful seance with the angel, etc. was an illusion. ... (Dunbar Correspondence, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah, cited in Cook 1991, 207-208).

In a letter to Albert D. Hager, secretary and librarian of the Chicago Historical Society, dated 21 October 1886, J. J. Snyder, Whitmer's friend and scribe, wrote that "the reporter of the Inter Ocean did have such interview, and the article is correct in substance[,] some mistakes in names and dates" (Mormon Collection, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois; note that the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* and other newspapers carried the article simultaneously with the *Omaha Herald*). The same month, Whitmer wrote to the editors of the *Saints' Herald* warning them of the errors in the recently published interview:

RICHMOND, Mo., 1886.

Dear Bros. Joseph and Blair:—I suppose you have seen an article in the Chi-

cago *Inter-Ocean* of 17th inst, being an interview of a reporter with me. In regard to it, I want to say as follows: The gentleman who wrote it used to believe in the Book of Mormon, but his faith has been shaken of late, and he came to me as an honest enquirer for the truth. He did not tell me anything about his intentions of publishing any article. He is with a job printing house, and wanted the tracing of the "characters," etc., to have a "wood cut" made of them to send to me. He is quite well posted on the Latter Day Saint question. He asked me many questions, but took no notes while here. I believe him to be an honest man.

On the following points he misunderstood me: In regard to some things about Oliver Cowdery; some things about Martin Harris. He misunderstood me in regard to Joseph's quarrel with his wife. I did not say that Joseph treated his wife brutally on that occasion. I only said that Joseph had quarreled with his wife, and lost the spirit of revelation until he repented and made amends with his wife. He also made a mistake in saying Nauvoo, when it should have been Kirtland. ... I write you this letter in confidence. Do not publish it.

Your brother in love,
DAVID WHITMER.
(*Saints' Herald* 33 [4 December 1886]: 764).

When the *Saints' Herald* reprinted the interview from the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* in November 1886, the editors criticized its factual errors, noting: "Since writing the chief part of the review we have received a letter from David Whitmer in which he denies having told his interviewer some of the things set forth in the foregoing article from the *Inter-Ocean*. His denial is not sufficiently specific, and what is worse he requests that we do not publish it!" (*Saints' Herald* 33 [20 November 1886]: 723). In a second letter to the *Herald,* Whitmer complained about this treatment by the RLDS publication and proceeded to quote from his first letter to document that he had, in fact, warned the *Herald*'s editors of specific inaccuracies. His second letter reads:

Before anything appeared in the *Herald* relating to that so called "interview," I sent them a letter correcting the mistakes in that newspaper article. The Editors of the *Herald had my letter before them,* before they published anything about this matter. I told them not to publish my letter for this reason, because I did not know the *Herald* was going to publish anything relating to that "interview." So the *Herald* Editors went ahead and published that so-called interview (with my letter before them) and appended comments to it *against me* on some of the *very points* which I stated in my letter that *I did not say*. For instance, the *Herald* almost abuses me for saying that Joseph had treated his wife *brutally,* when they had my letter be-

> fore them stating *I had said no such thing.* They say nothing about receiving my letter correcting mistakes, until in the winding up of the last article in the last number of the *Herald, after* they had already made it appear as if *I had* made *all of these statements* to a newspaper reporter. Is this fair dealing? ... (*Saints' Herald* 33 [4 December 1886]: 764).

Although the *Des Moines Daily News* was apparently the first to publish the interview, I have chosen to reproduce the interview from the paper Dunbar claimed to represent.

Richmond, Mo., Oct. 10—[Special Correspondence of THE HERALD.]—David Whitmer, the only living witness to "the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon," is not dying. His recent extraordinary feebleness was brought on by the intense heat, which very naturally affects one at his advanced age rather severely. He is not even confined absolutely to his bed, although he passes the greater portion of his time there, and does little else than rest. He is nearly 82 years of age. One would scarcely infer this from his erect carriage and wonderful nerve power any more than from the exceedingly fine control he exercises over a retentive and well-stored memory, which responds readily to his call with accurate details. Newspaper reporters are not admitted to his presence, and it is no wonder when one recalls the shameful misrepresentations which have been sent out as "interviews." The last of these was written by an unprincipled penny-a-liner who, when he was told emphatically that he could not see Mr. Whitmer, sent off to his paper the sensational announcement that the "White-haired Hero of Hill Cumorah" had just been stilled in death, and that with his latest breath he gurgled: "The Book of Mormon is a fraud."[3]

Your correspondent has just finished the last of a series of interesting conversations with the old gentleman, in which, after considerable coaching, he expressed himself without reserve, by reason of our personal friendship. David Whitmer is one of those three "special witnesses" who in 1829 sent out to the world the following quaint proclamation: ...[4]

Oliver Cowdery[5] never followed the church after the dissaffection of the Whitmer party in 1838, but remained in Missouri, and in 1852 [1850]

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3. The report referred to has not been located.

4. The Testimony of Three Witnesses has been deleted (see VI.G.1, TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES, JUN 1829; Cook 1991, 194-95).

5. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), who following his excommunication in 1838, lived in Tiffin, Ohio, and spent his last two years in Missouri, see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

was laid under the quiet green sod at Richmond. Harris[6] became estranged from the church about the same time and from the same causes also, but long after he had become feeble in both body and mind he was persuaded by persistent importuning to join his destinies with the Utah Mormons, and thither he went more than ten years ago, only to lay down his bones in the shadow of the great tabernacle. Mr. Whitmer entertains no doubt whatever that this singular action upon the part of Harris was wholly chargeable to the enfeebled condition of his mind, which had begun to manifest certain positive symptoms of imbecility even before he entertained the overtures from the Rocky Mountain saints. His step in this direction was greatly deplored by his old-time associates, "the witnesses" (there were eight other witnesses who testified to having handled the plates), who had come out solid from the church in 1838 and remained, with this one exception, in perfect accord. When this serious rupture in the organization occurred it took from the fold among others John Whitmer,[7] the church historian, and with him the church records covering their early history up to that date. These records are in Richmond in the possession of John Christian Whitmer,[8] a son of one of the "eight witnesses," and with the original manuscript of the book of Mormon, which David Whitmer holds, are really the most notable relics of the church and are much sought after by the Utah Mormons. In 1879 two of the Mormon "apostles," Orson Pratt[9] and Joseph F. Smith[10] (a son of Hyrum Smith,[11] who was killed with the prophet), visited Richmond for the express purpose of obtaining these time-worn sheets, and they came admirably prepared to pay for them. Mr. Whitmer received them courteously, and Apostle Pratt said: "Father Whitmer, we desire to purchase the manuscript, and we are authorized to say that you may name your price, and (with a patronizing air) be sure you put the price high enough, for the church has plenty of money in the treasury, you know." It was a brilliant overture, but how dis-

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6. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

7. On John Whitmer (1802-78), see "Introduction to John Whitmer Collection."

8. On John C. Whitmer, son of Jacob Whitmer, see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 7.

9. On Orson Pratt (1811-81), see introduction to I.A.16, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1839.

10. On Joseph F. Smith (1838-1918), son of Hyrum Smith and sixth president of the church, see Jenson 1971, 1:66, 3:781, 4:246, 319, 341.

11. On Hyrum Smith (1800-44), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 12.

mally it failed. Old Mr. Whitmer replied with quiet emphasis: "Elder Pratt, there isn't gold enough in the world to buy it." They knew it too, and no further importuning was indulged in. The tavern keeper makes the very reliable statement that before leaving Richmond Orson Pratt told him that they would have willingly paid $100,000 for the manuscript. ...[12] Mr. Whitmer's remarkable attachment for the manuscript may be easily accounted for. He is one of the very few who saw it written—that is, parts of it, and one may infer from the tenor of his testimony and the sincerity with which he still adheres to it that he entertains no shadow of a doubt that the record came forth by divine inspiration. His recital of reminiscences which take him back to the days of his devotion to the Mormon prophet are pathetic and interesting. He was but 24 years of age, and working on his father's farm near Palmyra, N.Y.,[13] when the village school teacher, Oliver Cowdery, at that time a stranger to him, mentioned in a somewhat serious way the reputed finding of the gold plates by Joseph Smith—a topic on everybody's tongue for miles around. Cowdery was visibly impressed by the report and announced his intention to visit Smith and investigate the matter for himself, promising Whitmer, at the latter's request to advise him of the results of his investigation upon his return. A letter from Cowdery, a few days later, urged his friend to come immediately to where Smith and the plates were, in order that he (Whitmer) might receive the personal assurance that Smith's claims were substantial.[14] He went. It was a two day's journey. The prophet received him with open arms, and he remained long enough to become strongly and favorably impressed with the situation. It was not long after this incident[15] that Whitmer while plowing in the field one afternoon was visited by Smith and Oliver Cowdery who requested him to accompany them into the woods for the purpose of witnessing a manifestation which should qualify him and Cowdery to testify as witnesses of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon; for Smith explained that this action was in pursuance of clearly defined in-

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12. Material unrelated to pre-Ohio Mormonism deleted (see Cook 1991, 196).

13. Peter Whitmer, Sr.'s, farm was in Fayette, Seneca County, New York, not in Palmyra. David Whitmer met Oliver Cowdery while on a business trip to Palmyra in 1828.

14. According to other statements, Whitmer received three letters prior to visiting Harmony, Pennsylvania, in early June 1829 (VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878; VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL*, 1 JUN 1881).

15. Late June 1829.

structions received from an angel of the Lord. The woods were not distant more than a stone's throw from the farm house and thither they repaired and engaged in "fervent prayer." All of a sudden, Mr. Whitmer says, he beheld a dazzlingly brilliant light that surpassed in brightness even the sun at noonday and which seemed to envelope the woods for a considerable distance around. Simultaneous with the light came a strange entrancing influence which permeated him so powerfully that he felt chained to the spot, while he also experienced a sensation of joy absolutely indescribable. While trying to realize what had come over him, there appeared immediately in front of the little party a personage clothed in white and near him a table containing a number of gold plates, some brass plates, the urim and thummum, the sword of Laban (a distinguished Nephite), and some other articles. Whitmer and Cowdery were requested by the personage to examine these things, and after the inspection they were told that the Lord would demand of them that they bear witness to all the wor[l]d. Mr. Whitmer describes every detail of the "vision" with great precision and much fervency, and insists that he handled and scrutinized the plates, and that the form and appearance of the strangely engraved characters were so impressed upon his memory that he would never forget them. At this particular state of the recital an inspection of a copy of the hieroglyphics made from the first of the gold plates by Joseph Smith and preserved with the same solicitude that is thrown around the original manuscript, becomes of curious interest. The accompanying cut is a perfect fac-simile of the little sheet which took Joseph Smith a whole week to copy so particular was he that the characters should be perfectly reproduced, and that the "reformed Egyptian" language should be shown up in all its native simplicity, for, it must not be forgotten, there was a singular significance in the errand which this scrap of paper was destined to perform. Martin Harris, who had received a similar "visitation" to that recounted of the other two witness[es], was dispatched to New York with this copy of the gold plate, which he presented to Prof. Anthon[16] with a request for the learned linguist to read it, in fulfillment of a prophecy of Isaiah, which is here literally applied and which reads: "And the word of the Lord has become unto them as the leaves of a book which are sealed, and which is delivered unto him that is learned, saying: read this, I pray thee, and he saith, I cannot for it is sealed," etc. [Isaiah 29:11] Much of the translation of the plates was accomplished at the house of Peter Whitmer,[17] the father of David, and the latter witnessed

16. On Charles Anthon (1797-1867), see introduction to V.D.1, CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834.

17. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

demonstrations, on more occasion than one, of the prophet's manipulation of the stone spectacles. He states that the work of translation occupied fully eight months,[18] and that at times this peculiar instrument would refuse to perform its functions. On such occasions the prophet would resort to prayer, and after a short season he would return to his work to find that the urim and thummum reflected the words of the translation with its wonted power. This rigorous exactment required him to be humble and spotless in his deportment in order that the work might progress. On one occasion the prophet had indulged in a stormy quarrel with his wife.[19] Without pacifying her or making any reparation for his brutal treatment, he returned to the room in the Whitmer residence to resume his work with the plates. The surface of the magic stone remained blank, and all his persistent efforts to bring out the coveted words proved abortive. He went into the woods again to pray, and this time was gone fully an hour. His friends became positively concerned, and were about to institute a search, when Joseph entered the room, pale and haggard, having suffered a vigorous chastisement at the hands of the Lord. He went straight in humiliation to his wife, entreated and received her forgiveness, returned to his work, and, much to the joy of himself and his anxious friends surrounding him, the stone again glared forth its letters of fire. The urim and thummum, in this strange process of translation, would reflect a number of words in pure English, which would remain on its face until the party acting as scribe had got it correctly written, and the occasional disposition of the characters to remain long after they had been so written was always an infallible evidence that there was something wrong in the translation of the record, and a close comparison would invariably reveal this fact. When the necessary corrections has been made the words would instantly disappear from the urim and thummum and new ones take their place. The first 116 pages when completed were by permission of the prophet entrusted to the hands of Martin Harris, who carried them home to his incredulous relatives in triumph, hoping by the exhibition to convert his family and kinfolk from their uncompromising hostility to the religious premises he had adopted. Upon retiring at night he locked up the precious pages in a bureau drawer, along with his money and other valuables. In the morning he was shocked to find that they had been stolen while his money had been left untouched. They were never found and were never replaced, so that the Book of Mor-

18. It took only three months, from 7 April to about 1 July 1829.

19. Whitmer subsequently stated that he did not intend to be understood as saying Joseph Smith "treated his wife brutally," only that he had "quarreled with his wife" on this occasion (see *Saints' Herald* 33 [4 December 1886]: 764, quoted in the editorial note).

mon is today minus just 116 pages of the original matter, which would increase the volume fully one fourth its present size. This unpardonable carelessness evoked the stormiest kind of chastisement from the Lord, who took from the prophet the urim and thummum and otherwise expressed his condemnation. By fervent prayer and by otherwise humbling himself, the prophet, however, again found favor, and was presented with a strange oval-shaped, chocolate-colored stone about the size of an egg, only more flat, which, it was promised, should serve the same purpose as the missing urim and thummim (the latter was a pair of transparent stones set in a bow-shaped frame and very much resembled a pair of spectacles). With this stone all of the present Book of Mormon was translated. It is the only one of these relics which is not in the possession of the Whitmers. For years Oliver Cowdery surrounded it with care and solicitude, but at his death, old Phineas Young,[20] a brother of Brigham Young,[21] and an old-time and once intimate friend of the Cowdery family, came out from Salt Lake City, and during his visit he contrived to get the stone from its hiding place, through a little deceptive sophistry, expended upon the grief-stricken widow, [and] when he returned to Utah he carried it in triumph to the apostles of Brigham Young's "lion house."[22] In reciting this early experience of the church Mr. Whitmer rises to his feet and with an intense earnestness and a clear and forcible iteration he carries the listener along through every detail with wonderful precision. ...[23] The tendency of Smith to abandon the primitive faith and introduce these damnable doctrines, Mr. Whitmer assures me, began to develop quite early in the history of the church. He manifested an alarming disposition to get revelations to cover every exigency that would arise, and in this he was eagerly urged on by some of his associates who would frequently come to him with the request that he "ask the Lord" about this thing or the other. The first striking instance of it, and one that gave rise to grave apprehensions in the minds of David Whitmer and others of his kind, occurred in connection with the publishing of the first edition of the Book of Mormon. Martin Harris was a well-to-do farmer, and he was expected to mortgage his property for the purpose of raising the necessary funds for the printing of the

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20. On Phineas Howe Young (1799-1879), see introduction to III.K.23, PHINEAS HOWE YOUNG AUTOBIOGRAPHY, 1863.

21. On Brigham Young (1801-77), see introduction to III.K.19, BRIGHAM YOUNG ACCOUNTS, 1855 & 1857.

22. Phineas Young was Oliver Cowdery's brother-in-law. He obtained the stone from Oliver's widow in 1850 (see Quinn 1987, 195).

23. Material unrelated to pre-Ohio Mormonism is here deleted (see Cook 1991, 201-202).

book. His seeming reticence to act in the matter, which Mr. Whitmer attributes to the cautious business-like manner in which he did everything, offended some of the brethren, and Hyrum Smith, "The Patriarch," proposed that some of them take the manuscript to Canada and there sell the copyright for sufficient money to enable them to get out the publication. A revelation was procured "to order" and warranted to fit, a thing which occurred with remarkable frequency afterwards and which caused it to be a matter of foregone conclusion that whatever the desires of the favored few expressed or the pressing emergency of the hour demanded it would be admirably embodied in the "message from heaven." Thus "the word of the Lord came," directing that two of the brethren go to Canada as suggested. They went. They also returned, but they brought no money with them, and no promise of any.[24] Revelations came in the same manner respecting the establishment of the high priesthood system, which was the work of Sydney Rigdom, an ambitious biblical scholar, who yearned for authority and notoriety. As well might they restore, says Mr. Whitmer, circumcision and the typical ordinances that were annihilated by Christ's coming as to ornament the church premises with Melchisidec priests.

...[25] David Whitmer, during his residence of nearly half a century in Richmond, has at different times filled the offices of mayor and councilman. He is surrounded with comfortable circumstances and is very highly and very generally respected. Some time ago he baptized his nephew, John Christian Whitmer, whom he has since ordained an elder, and who is as valiant for the cause as his father, Jacob Whitmer,[26] was before him. The old gentleman's son, David J. Whitmer[27]; his grandson, George W. L. Schweich,[28] and Phi-

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24. See also VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 30-31; VI.C.2, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM MCLELLIN, 2 FEB 1848; VI.F.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO JOSEPH SMITH, III, JUL & SEP 1872, 1; and VI.F.12, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO [JAMES T. COBB?], CIRCA 1881.

25. Material unrelated to pre-Ohio Mormonism deleted here (see Cook 1991, 204-206).

26. On Jacob Whitmer (1800-56), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 98.

27. On David Whitmer, Jr., see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 5.

28. On George W. Schweich, see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 6.

lander Page[29] are also zealous members of the little Church of Christ, which at the present time comprises a fair-sized membership. They are working along quietly and are "looking forward to the time when the Lord shall send the gospel to the remnant of the seed of Israel," the Lamanites or American Indians.

29. On Philander Page, see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 21.

30.
David Whitmer Interview with M. J. Hubble, November 1886

M. J. Hubble, Account, 13 November 1886, Hubble Family Papers, University of Missouri (and State Historical Society of Missouri), Western Historical Manuscripts Library, Columbia, Missouri.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Martin Jones Hubble (1835-?) was a successful businessman living in Springfield, Greene County, Missouri. The Hubble Collection at the State Historical Society of Missouri consists of thirty-five folders of letters and documents collected by Miss Janie Hubble of Springfield, Missouri, in an attempt to compile a family genealogy and locate a revolutionary war ancestor so she could join the Daughters of the American Revolution. The following document from the collection is an account of Martin Hubble's interview with David Whitmer.

Richmond[,] Nov 13/[18]86

I have just come from an interview with David Whitmer who is one of the witnesses to the translation of the Mormon Bible or "Book of Mormon" as he alw=ays called it when speaking of ~~[translation]~~ the book. I did not ask him how old he was but I think he must be between 75 & 80 years old,[1] about 5 feet 9 inches high hair Iron grey not white smooth shaven & when young would I think have weighed 150 lbs. his nose & eyes are his strong features, the first is large & shaped somewhat after the manner of what the negroes in the south used to call "Hawk Nosed" [p. 1] ~~His~~ the eye, when he was discussing the "Plates" from which Joe Smith made the translation (or pretended to) lighted as brillian[t]ly as ever I seen an eye in my life, it brought back, in a flash, the eyes of a beautiful girl in Springfield[,] Mo, when at a social party <in 1856> I told her I had news from her lover who had just got to Calafornia via overland route with a herd of cattle—it was the only time I have ever seen Miss Lizzie S—s eyes rivaled, the thumb of his right hand is missing & he is now suff=ering from ~~the~~ rheumatic pains

1. Whitmer was 81.

I was met at the door by a pleasant faced inteligent [p. 2] lady of 25 years I should think, who was present at the conversation & who called Mr Whitmar Grandpappa

I asked as soon as I could the privalidge of an interview for publication but he said he prefered not as an interview published in a Chicago paper some years ago[2] & written I think he said by Mr Jacob T Childs[3] <Editor> of the "Richmond Conservator" was nearly right, ("only two trifling errors" he said,) & he wanted that "to stand for all time as his testimony as to things therein mentioned," So I ~~jot~~ now put on paper for my own benefit what Mr Whitmer told me [p. 3] Copying his language as near as I Can. "My Brother was Sheriff of our county in Western New York.[4] He got Cripled & had business in the neighborhood of where the Smiths lived & sent Me to attend to it, while trans=acting the business I first heard of the Smiths, & the translation.[5] A part of the book of Lehigh [Lehi] had been translated, about 150 pages & taken to Philadelphia [Palmyra] by one of the parties, who put it in ~~to~~ a bureau drawer at night, the next morning it was gone & has never yet been found.[6] Joseph Smith was informed that for his transgressing the [p. 4] the command, to keep it always under his care, he would be punished & the "gift" of reading through the spectacles was taken from him for about 3 months[7] & he never was allowed to see the "plates" again but at the end of his punishment, he was told that he might translate the book of Mormon, instead of the book of Lehigh but would not be permitted to see the "plates"[,] that the "Characters" would appear before him & when he translated them

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2. Most likely VI.A.14, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* 14 OCT 1881.

3. On Jacob T. Childs, see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878, n. 4.

4. Richard L. Anderson reports that Christian Whitmer was "elected as one of six constables of Fayette township in 1828 and 1829" (R. L. Anderson 1981, 125).

5. Evidently in late 1828.

6. Hubble evidently conflates the story of Martin Harris taking the Book of Mormon characters to scholars in New York and Philadelphia in February 1828 and his subsequent loss of about 116 pages of the original manuscript in Palmyra about June-July 1828 (see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection"). The only other source that mentions Harris going to Philadelphia is IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 4.

7. According to Lucy Smith, the period was July to mid-September 1828 (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:86-87). However, Joseph Smith's history states that the plates were returned "in a few days" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 10).

correctly they would disappear & new ones come in their place[;] if not translated correctly <the first time> they would remain untill they were [,] [p. 5] which in several instances he knew to be true because he said Joseph Smith was a man of limited education [who] could hardly write legibly

The statement regarding the "Book of Lehigh" surprised Me, never having heard it before, although, I can well remem=ber the "Mormon War", my Father having participated therein, & I can remember the pain & sorrow his depar=ture caused my Mother & her joy at his return, therefore I have been particular to write his statement correctly

He said the Brass or Gold Plates were bound to=gather at the back by having 3 rings run through & when [p. 6] a page was translated it turned back on the ring.

He said Smith transl=ated by Means of a pair of large bowed Specticles ie the "book of Mormon",[8] that the Characters would appear in the air & stay untill correctly translated & then disappear[,] that Smith was ~~[unread]~~ ignorant of the Bible[,] that when in translating he first came to where Jerusalem was spoken of as ~~the~~ <a> "Walled City" he stop[p]ed untill they got a Bible & showed him where the fact was recorded—Smith not believing it was a walled City.[9]

Mr W[hitmer] said that when Jerusalem was captured by [p. 7] the Babalonians[,] that many of the Jewish histories were missing & [he] believes that the book of Lehigh & Book of Mormon were safely secured by their proper owners & brought to this [~~-~~] continent & under the guidance of Almighty God buried untill future generations should be ripe for the truth. Mr W[hitmer] also expressed reverently, his belief in "Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ". Although an old man his mind is clear ~~& he expresses his mind~~ & vi[g]orous & he expresses him=self in good language & he <u>believes what he says</u>

8. This confusing sentence was probably intended to read: "He said Smith transl=ated the 'Book of Mormon' by Means of a pair of large bow-shaped Specticles."

9. Cf. VI.A.3, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* AUG 1875. The information about the walls of Jerusalem originated with Emma Smith (see I.F.1, EMMA SMITH BIDAMON INTERVIEW WITH EDMUND C. BRIGGS, 1856).

31.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 2 JANUARY 1887

1. Edward Stevenson, Journal, 28:123-130, entry of 2 January 1887, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
2. Edward Stevenson to Franklin D. Richards, 10 January 1887, Edward Stevenson, Journal, 28:106-113, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
3. Edward Stevenson, "A Visit to David Whitmer," *Juvenile Instructor* 22 (15 February 1887): 55.
4. Edward Stevenson, "The Thirteenth Witness to the Plates of the Book of Mormon," *Juvenile Instructor* 24 (1 January 1889): 22-23.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Nine days after his third interview with David Whitmer (see introduction to VI.A.5, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 22-23 DEC 1877), Edward Stevenson sent a note to the editors of the *Millennial Star,* who summarized: "Brother Stevenson says that he [Whitmer] still continues to bear a faithful testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon. He bore that testimony first in his youth, and now when his limbs are tottering with age, and there are at best a few feeble steps between him and his grave, he re-affirms his first statement with all the ardor of conviction" (*Millennial Star,* 14 February 1887, cited in Cook 1991, 217).

[*1. Journal, 2 January 1887*]

2d of Jan. 1887. ... Breakfast 6.30 A.M. very good & clean but to[o] much hurry as train starts at 7[.] Waiter takes our baggage to train and we leave Kansas it is very cold 17 deg[rees] Below Zero [p. 123] we pass liberty landing, whare I spent some some of my boyish days. 52 years ago. at 8.50 AM we stop of[f] at lexington Junction cold terrible cold morning[.] train 6.30 only[,] to day [being] Sunday, [and] it being so cold we concluded to walk out to Richmond[,] Ray Co.[,] Mo. whare my mother a widdow lived when I was in my teens[.] I well remember going on foot from Far West, to Richmond, for my gun that I with the rest of the Latter Day Saints surrendered [to the state militia] in the Hollow Square at Far West in 1837 or [183]8. So as I

walk out on Sunday the 2d day of a new year to visit David Whitmer, who has Stood in the presance of an Angle, it is with no ordinary feelings I assure all who may read this narative and especialy as I am now an exile from [my childhood] home and [our former] Enimies who would [have] delight[ed] to imprison me for only obeying Gods Commands, for an expose [ex post] Facto law. But the time is short for [the prophesied] intrusion on our Noble and God[-]like Constitution & The Stars and Stripes, long may they Wave as a Becon of true Liberty. [p. 124] E[mily] E St[evenson][1] nearly gave out twice as She is a poor walker we stoped twice and one very kind Mo [Missouri] Woman gave us some wine. 17 Below zero and the coldest day for years in this Sexion [section] of country. We arrived at David Whitmers and was welcombed. we spent 4 [h]ours and was well entertained. Mr [*blank space*][2] Page a son of hyrum Page[3] was <thare>[.] I have visited him in 1878, and in 1886, & now in 1887. and each time see the manuscript[s]. But Mrs S[tevenson]. had not[.] have[ing] [seen them,] I had them brought out and we again looked them over[.] portions [were] sewed together with yarn [—]White[,] dark[,] and grey color[e]d. we also looked over the coppy of Charactors that Martin Harris[4] took to Professor Anthon[5] [of] NY [(]7 lines 7 or 8 inches long 3 or 4 in[ches] wide, of very curios workman ship as follows exact coppy)[6] ... [p. 125] ...

[The] Facsimile of reformed Egyptian, as in the posesion of David Whitmer [was] coppied by Joseph Smith from the Plates of the Book of Mormon and taken by Martin Harris to Professor Anthon [of] N.Y. the paper is 8 inches and 3/8th of an inch long and 3 in[ches] & 3/8th in[ches]. Width[,] and just 7 lines and on top above the 7 lines are [is the word] Charactors with the [letter] h out[7] just as in my Coppy[.] [p. 126] at the end of each line will be found my insersion in Brackets the No [number] of each line hence after that is the beginning of each line 1 to 7[.] I felt as though it would be of Interest to

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1. Emily E. (Williams) Stevenson, Edward Stevenson's plural wife whom he had married in 1857.

2. Probably Philander Page.

3. On Hiram Page (1800-52), see introduction to VI.C.1, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM MCLELLIN, 30 MAY 1847.

4. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

5. On Charles Anthon (1797-1867), see introduction to V.D.1, CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834.

6. Stevenson traced the characters (see also V.E.2. BOOK OF MORMON CHARACTERS, DEC 1827-FEB 1828).

7. In other words, the seven lines are preceded by the word "Caractors," absent the "h".

Coppy [p. 126] them into my journal makeing this journal of interest throuough [throughout]

David Bore his testimony of standing in the presence of the angle relateing meny very interesting incidents which I have written to the M[i]lenial Star in liverpool.[,] Logan Journal[,] Des[eret] News[,] and Juvenile Instructor and may be found [*several lines blank*]

David said to Mrs S[tevenson]. my testimony as found in the Book of Mormon is verily true & I cannot deny it[.] I know[,] he said[,] that the Book of Mormon is as true as the Bible, he relates seeing a messenger while plowing who said Blessed is the name of the Lord and they who keep his Commandments[.] soon after Joseph Smith & O[liver]. Cowdry[8] came along[.] David tied his team to the fense[.] the 3 were about 40 [p. 127] 40 rods from his Fathers[.] while sitting on a log an Angle apeared in the midst of a brightness that preceded him[.] on a table in front of him was the Ball or Compas, used by Lehi in the Wilderness[,] Sword of Laban[,] Urim & Thumim or Interpreters[,] also the Plates which was shown to them and they were commanded to bear testamony of these things & he said as he lived those things [w]ere true[.] he fired up with zeal[.] he is 82 years old the 7th day of this month. he said that 1st of June [1829] he received a letter from [Oliver Cowdery telling him to come to Harmony, Pennsylvania.] the Prophet looks into the seer stone [and is] told [the] names of each stopping place [Whitmer visited along the way.] forgetting [the] names [himself,] on [the] return [trip,] O[liver]. Cowdry[,] who [had] mad[e] notes for every one[, showed them to be] just as the Prophet related[.] David said this strenthened his Faith in the Prophet & he was Baptized [in the] the middle of June 1829 and [was] ordained an Elder [the] last of June the 3d Elder in the Church—on their way from Palmyra[9] they saw a strange looking [p. 128] man, with a knapsac on his back the strap crossing his breast[.] he came up alongside of the wagon[.] David asked him to ride, no I am going over to Cumorah [he said] & suddenly disappeared[.] by request of the Brethren Joseph asked the Lord who this mysterious stranger was, who said it was one of the 3 Nephites. with the Plates. David said he had see[n] him after near his Father's house & that his mother also had see[n] him. & he had shown the plates to her. on the 6th of April 1830, 6 Elders were at Peter Whitmers[,][10] Davids

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8. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

9. Rather, from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Fayette, New York (see VI.A.27, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 9 FEB 1886).

10. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

Fathers [house, and] 2 Rooms were filled with members about 20 from Colesville, 15 from Manchester Church and about 20 from aro[u]nd about Father Whitmers[.] about 50 members & the 6 Elders were present[.] Elders names are Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdry[,] David Whitmer, John Whitmer[,][11] Peter Whitmer[12] & Hyrum Smith,[13] & he believes that Martin Harris was ordained at conference. [p. 129] We felt repaid for our walk and visit which will make alasting impresion and he shook hands with God Bless you

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[*2. Letter to Franklin D. Richards, 10 January 1887*]

Sanduskey[,] Ohio

10th Jan. 1887

President F. D. Richards[14]

Dear Brother [p. 106]

... I Called again on our old friend & Brother David Whitmer this being my 3d visit with him. I Spent 3 or 4 [h]ours with him very Interestingly & he again proudly Showed us the Manuscript of the Book of Mormon & also the 7 or 8 lines of Charactors taken from the plates of the Book of Mormon & which were presented to Professor Anthon of N.Y. ... [p. 108] David Whitmer says that the Josephites was displeased with him because he maintained that the 116 pages which were translated & written by Martin Harris was translated by the Urim & Thumin or Interpreters as he prefered calling them. but after the loss of the 116 [p. 109] pages the remainder of the translation was done with the seer stone, and that Martin wrote Some & it was at this time when Martin when Martin put the wrong Stone in the hat deceiving the Prophet who looked into the hat[, and this is] when he [Joseph] exclaimed all is as dark as Egypt. Martin Said he done this to stop the mouths of fools who said the Prophet knew [the text] by heart & would repeat [it]. Martin Harris related more fully the same story when I brought him from Kirtland[,] Ohio.[15] David W[hitmer]. related an Incident that took place

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11. On John Whitmer (1802-78), see "Introduction to John Whitmer Collection."

12. On Peter Whitmer, Jr. (1809-36), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 63.

13. On Hyrum Smith (1800-44), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 12.

14. On Franklin D. Richards (1821-99), a member of the Council of Twelve Apostles (1849-99), see Jenson 1971, 1:115-121.

15. This occurred in August 1870 (see III.F.13, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEWS WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 1870).

about the first of June 1829—the Prophet wrote to him to Come down to Palmyra[16] & bring him up to Father Whitmers to translate &c—on his arival at Palmyra he said that the Prophet Joseph looked into the Seer Stone & told each stoping place, Inn & Proprietor, [Whitmer] having forgotten their names, [but] O[liver]. Cowdry made a note of their names <&c> [p. 110] [and] on their ~~names~~ <return they discovered that the Prophet was> correct at each of the 3 places, & he [Whitmer] said this strengthened his faith in the Prophet & so[o]n after he was Baptized about the middle of June 1829, & was ordained <he believes> the latter part of June as the 3d Elder. Joseph & Oliver haveing been ordained before they <came> from Palmyra N.Y.[17] Joseph ordaining Oliver & then Oliver ordained Joseph, the Prophet, he seems to know nothing about Peter, James & John, neither knows of eny history <of this> kept by John Whitmer. he said that while comeing from Palmyra[18] an aged looking man came along on foot with a knapsac on his back with the strap crossed on his breast quite natural. David being the driver asked this stranger to ride[,] who declined[,] saying[,] I am going over to Comorah & [he] soon disapeared in an open field much to their suprise. The Brethren desired the Prophet to enquire of the Lord conserning this stranger, for he [Whitmer] [p. 111] said that they had peculiar feelings about their visitor. In a short time David said he looked at Joseph & his Countenance was heavenly, nearly white, & he said that their visitor was one of the 3 Nephites with the plates in the knapsac Some time after their arival the same personage apeared to David, & also to ~~his~~ Davids mother[,] Said that she had see[n] this same discribed & distinguished personage & She further said that he showed her the plates of the Record of the Book of Mormon[.] She giving a correct discription of them, it was thought this was a favour to her because of her kindness to the Prophet.[19] Brother David said that he was the 3d Elder ordained John Whitmer 4th Peter Whitmer 5th & Hyrum Smith 6th[.] Those 6 Elders were present at the organization of the church at Father Whitmers as well as others who had joined the Church. at Colesville about 20 members were thare & about 15 at Manchester 20 around about Whitmers, at the organization thare were nearly 2 rooms full about 45 to 50[,] [p. 112] David said he thought were present[,] & he believed that Martin Harris was ordained at that Conference[.] But he distinctly said thare were but 6 Elders

16. See n. 9 above.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Concerning Mary Musselman Whitmer's experience, see also VI.C.4, JOHN C. WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW JENSON AND EDWARD STEVENSON, 11 OCT 1888.

met at the Conference, but those mostly who had been baptized as members were at the organization, as usual David Whitmer was animated in his testamony especially on the subject of the vision. He says it was about 40 rods from Father Whitmers whare he saw the Angle & was charged to bear his testamony of the same, his health is 50 Per. c[en]t. better than last year. E. S. ... [p. 113]

[*3. Reminiscence, 1887*]

I recently had great pleasure in visiting and conversing with David Whitmer, the only surviving witness of the three whose names are prefixed to the Book of Mormon, testifying that an angel came down from heaven and laid the plates before their eyes, and they were commanded to bear witness of the truth of what they saw and knew to be correct. Though now very aged, his testimony is still undimmed, and his countenance always brightens in speaking of this most memorable event in his history. Already I had visited this witness on two previous occasions, and in neither of my visits did I find his demeanor, belief or assertions changed concerning this important matter.

On the 2nd day of this year I left Kansas City, Mo., and rode forty-two miles on the cars to Lexington Junction, where I unfortunately failed to make train connection to go five miles further to Richmond, Ray Co., the home of him I sought. But, determined not to be baffled, I decided to walk the distance, though the cold was intense, the thermometer going to 17° below zero. I subsequently felt repaid for my pains in the pleasant reception and agreeable conversation with Mr. Whitmer.

He wore a black suit of clothes and dark close-fitting cap on his head. He appeared very noble to me, and his face seemed to beam with intelligence.

He told me that in the beginning of June, 1829, he received a letter from the Prophet asking him to come to Palmyra[20] and convey him to his father's house, that he might there be able to work on the translation of the Book of Mormon. The journey required about three days each way, and it was necessary to put up at inns on the way. David having forgotten the names of the inns and their proprietors, Joseph looked through the seer stone and told him them. Oliver Cowdery made a note of these, and by inquiry on the journey found that the Prophet had stated correctly.

Soon after arriving at his father's, David was baptized in Seneca Lake. This was about the middle of June, and shortly thereafter he was ordained an

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20. Ibid.

Elder, he being the third in the Church, as he claims, to receive this ordination.

While on the return journey from Palmyra, David noticed a somewhat aged-looking man who approached them on the road. He had a very pleasant face, about which, however, there seemed something pecuilar [peculiar], and he carried a knapsack on his back fastened with straps which crossed his breast. David asked him to take a ride, but he declined, saying: "I am going over to Cumorah," and then disappeared very suddenly, though there was no chance for him to secrete himself in the open country through which the party was then passing. All felt very strange concerning this personage and the Prophet was besought to inquire of the Lord concerning him. Shortly afterwards, David relates, the Prophet looked very white but with a heavenly appearance and said their visitor was one of the three Nephites to whom the Savior gave the promise of life on earth until He should come in power. After arriving home, David again saw this personage, and Mother Whitmer, who was very kind to Joseph Smith, is said to have seen not only this Nephite, but to have also been shown by him the sealed and unsealed portions of the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated.

[*4. Reminiscence, 1889*]

It is well known that three witnesses as well as Joseph Smith, testify of seeing an angel and hearing his voice, also of seeing the plates containing the characters from which the Book of Mormon was printed.

There are eight witnesses who also testify of seeing and handling the gold plates. Twelve witnesses including Joseph Smith. The thirteenth witness is Mary Musselman Whitmer,[21] the wife of Peter Whitmer, sen., and mother of five of the witnesses. In 1887, we had the pleasure of visiting Uncle David Whitmer, as he is so familiarly known, and at other times since we have visited him, and held many familiar conversations with him on the subject of the coming forth of the plates, the translation of them, and the visit of an angel, which never failed to inspire him with enthusiastic delight. On one occasion while sitting with Uncle David by the fireside, he said: "My mother died while sitting in that very chair you are now occupying." He feelingly spoke of the virtues and good acts of his mother, and her kindness to Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and his party, while they were translating the Book of Mormon at his father's house in Fayette, Seneca County, New York.

While in this mood of conversation he related to me, a visit of the angel

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21. On Mary Musselman Whitmer (1778-1856), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 101.

Moroni to his mother. Uncle David said: "My mother went to the barn to milk the cows, where she met a mysterious personage who showed her the golden plates, turning them over leaf by leaf, with the exception of a portion of them which were fastened together with rings["] (the sealed part of the plates).

David said this occurred after he had seen the same messenger on the way from Harmony to Fayette. When he brought Joseph and Oliver in his wagon from Harmony, Pa., he [the messenger] appeared walking with a knapsack on his back with the straps crossed on his breast. Uncle David asked him to ride with them, to which he replied, "No, I am going over to Cumorah," and suddenly disappeared in the midst of a plain.

David said that they felt a very strange feeling come over them, and Joseph, the Prophet, inquired of the Lord concerning it, and then said to the brethren that the mysterious stranger was Moroni with the plates of gold.[22] It will be remembered that Joseph, the Prophet, was beset with a wicked class of men who sought to steal the plates from him, so much so that his life was in danger; therefore he sought to know of the Lord the best mode of transferring the plates from Harmony to Fayette. They were finally taken in charge by the angel to deliver them to the [p. 22] Prophet again at the end of their journey. David told me that they felt the same heavenly influence after their arrival at his father's home previous to his mother's visitation and view of the plates. He expressed his firm conviction of the truth of his mother's testimony.

22. Previous versions of the story, including Stevenson's journal entry of 2 January 1887, designate the angel as one of the Three Nephites.

32.
DAVID WHITMER TO ANTHONY METCALF, 2 APRIL 1887

A[nthony]. Metcalf, *Ten Years before the Mast* ([Malad City, Idaho]: n.p. [1888]), 73-74.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Anthony Metcalf, age forty, is listed in the 1870 census of Hyde Park, Cache County, Utah, as a farmer. In a letter to Metcalf, dated 2 April 1887, a portion of which Metcalf published the following year. David Whitmer defended his testimony of the Book of Mormon. Metcalf introduced the letter as follows:

> In March, 1887, I wrote a letter to David Whitmer, requesting him to explain to me the condition he was in when he saw the angel and the plates, from which the Book of Mormon is supposed to have been translated. In April, 1887, I received a letter from David Whitmer, dated on the second of that month, replying to my communication, from which I copy, verbatim, as follows. ...

In regards to my testimony to the visitation of the angel, who declared to us three witnesses that the Book of [p. 73] Mormon is true, I have this to say: Of course we were in the spirit when we had the view, for no man can behold the face of an angel, except in a spiritual view, but we were in the body also, and everything was as natural to us, as it is at any time. Martin Harris, you say, called it "being in vision." We read in the Scriptures, Cornelius saw, in a vision, an angel of God, Daniel saw an angel in a vision, also in other places it states they saw an angel in the spirit. A bright light enveloped us where we were, that filled [the woods as] at noon day, and there in a *vision* or in the *spirit,* we saw and heard just as it is stated in my testimony in the Book of Mormon. I am now passed eighty-two years old, and I have a brother, J. J. Snyder,[1] to do my writing for me, at my dictation.

[Signed] DAVID WHITMER.

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1. John J. Snyder was a close associate in Whitmer's Church of Christ (Shields 1982, 102-3).

33.
DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS*, 1887

David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, Missouri: David Whitmer, 1887), 8, 10-12, 29-35, 37-38, 41, 49-51, 55-56, 64, 73, 75.

EDITORIAL NOTE

In April 1887, one year before his death, the eighty-two-year-old David Whitmer published a 75-page pamphlet, *An Address to All Believers in Christ,* in which he declared his testimony of the Book of Mormon and explained his reasons for resigning from Joseph Smith's church in 1838. Historian Lyndon W. Cook describes Whitmer's *Address* as "a humble appeal to bring believing Christians to Mormonism and to unite the scattered believers of the original faith. It is poorly organized and sentimentalized—not so much a detailed record as almost obsessive ruminations of a few themes—but it does sum up both Whitmer's views and his nature. It confirms the details of his participation in the Restoration as he perceived them, but it is a sweeping rejection of Joseph Smith and the church after 1834" (Cook 1991, xxiv).

Whitmer not only challenged the popular Mormon interpretations of past events, he also posed a dilemma for those who looked to Whitmer's testimony as proof for the Book of Mormon's divine authenticity. Whitmer challenged believers: "If you believe my testimony to the Book of Mormon; if you believe that God spake to us three witnesses by his own voice, then I tell you that in June, 1838, God spake to me again by his own voice from the heavens, and told me to 'separate myself from among the Latter Day Saints ...'" (p. 27). However, Whitmer's challenge had little effect on Mormons. When Whitmer explained that Joseph Smith had fallen and that his revelations were inspired by the wishes of his own heart (pp. 30-38, 64-67), he perhaps unwittingly invited his readers to make the same conclusion about his own 1838 revelation.

For the most part, I have deleted Whitmer's long theological diatribes. The reader should keep in mind that Whitmer is not simply relating early Mormon history but is marshaling historical evidence polemically in an effort to support his theological positions. Hence, his reminiscences are subject to some minor distortion and should be read with caution.[1]

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1. Whitmer's *Address* consists of twelve chapters; these chapter numbers and headings have been omitted from this reproduction.

... It is recorded in the American Cyclopædia and the Encyclopædia Britannica, that I, David Whitmer, have denied my testimony as one of the three witnesses to the divinity of the Book of Mormon; and that the other two witnesses, Oliver Cowdery[2] and Martin Harris,[3] denied their testimony to that Book. I will say once more to all mankind, that I have never at any time denied that testimony or any part thereof. I also testify to the world, that neither Oliver Cowdery or Martin Harris ever at any time denied their testimony. They both died reaffirming the truth of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. I was present at the death bed of Oliver Cowdery, and his last words were, "*Brother David, be true to your testimony to the Book of Mormon.*" He died here in Richmond, Mo., on March 3d, 1850. Many witnesses yet live in Richmond, who will testify to the truth of these facts, as well as to the good character of Oliver Cowdery. The very powers of darkness have combined against the Book of Mormon, to prove that it is not the word of God, and this should go to prove to men of spiritual understanding, that the Book is true. To show the reader what I have had to contend with, I give you below a copy of a leaflet which I had printed and distributed in March, 1881. ... [p. 8] ...[4]

Besides other false statements that are in the two encyclopædias above mentioned is the old story of the Spaulding manuscript. That is, that one Solomon Spaulding who died in Amity, Penn., in 1816, had written a romance, the scene of which was among the ancient Indians who lived in this country. That Spaulding died before he published his romance, and that Sydney Rigdon[5] got hold of the manuscript in a printing office and copied it; that subsequently the manuscript was returned to Solomon Spaulding; that thirteen years after the death of Spaulding, in 1829, Rigdon became associated with Joseph Smith, who read the Spaulding manuscript from behind a blanket to Oliver Cowdery, his amanuensis, who wrote it down. Hence the origin of the Book of Mormon.[6] This is what is claimed by the enemies of the book: Satan had to concoct some plan to account for the origin of that book.

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2. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

3. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

4. Whitmer's Proclamation deleted here (see VI.A.11, DAVID WHITMER PROCLAMATION, 19 MAR 1881).

5. On Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), see introduction to I.A.13, SIDNEY RIGDON ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1836.

6. For a discussion of the Spaulding theory of the Book of Mormon's origin, see Bush 1977.

I will say that all who desire to investigate the Spaulding manuscript story will not be obliged to go very far before they will see the entire [p. 10] falsity of that claim. I testify to the world that I am an eye-witness to the translation of the greater part of the Book of Mormon. Part of it was translated in my father's house in Fayette, Seneca County, N.Y. Farther on I give a description of the manner in which the book was translated.

... Neither Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris or myself ever met Sydney Rigdon until after the Book of Mormon was in print. I know this of my own personal knowledge, being with Joseph Smith, in Seneca County, N.Y., in the winter of 1830, when Sydney Rigdon and Edward Partridge[7] came from Kirtland, Ohio, to see Joseph Smith, and where Rigdon and Partridge saw Joseph Smith for the first time in their lives.[8]

The Spaulding manuscript story is a myth; there being no direct testimony on record in regard to Rigdon's connection with the manuscript of Solomon Spaulding.

I have in my possession the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon, in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery and others, also the original paper containing some of the characters transcribed from one of the golden plates, which paper Martin Harris took to Professor Anthon,[9] of New York, for him to read "*the words of a book that is sealed* [Isa. 29:11]:" but the learned professor, although a great linguist could not read the language of the Nephites.[10] ... [p. 11] ...

I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing.[11] One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear,

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7. On Edward Partridge (1793-1840), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 193.

8. Cf. I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 78-80.

9. On Charles Anthon (1797-1867), see introduction to V.D.1, CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1834.

10. Concerning Anthon's inability to read the characters, see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

11. For another source on the appearance of parchment in the stone, see I.A.12, TRUMAN COE ACCOUNT, 1836.

and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man. ... [p. 12]

... The angel who declared unto us that the Book of Mormon was true, also declared unto us that the Bible was true. ... [p. 29] ...

In June 1829, the translation of the Book of Mormon was finished. God gave it to us as his Holy Word, and left us as men to work out our own salvation and set in order the Church of Christ according to the written word. He left us as men to receive of His Spirit as we walked worthy to receive it; and His Spirit guides men into all truth; but the spirit of man guides man into error. When God had given us the Book of Mormon, and a few revelations in 1829 by the same means that the Book was translated, commanding us to rely upon the written word in establishing the church [D&C 18:3-4], He did His part; and left us to do our part and to be guided by the Holy Ghost as we walked worthy to receive. ...

In the beginning we walked humble and worthy to receive a great portion of the Spirit of God, and we were guided rightly at first in establishing the Church, but we soon began to drift into errors, because we heeded our own desires too much, instead of relying solely upon God and being led entirely by His Holy Spirit. How easy it is for a man to drift into errors, and think at the time that he is doing God's will. ...

At times when Brother Joseph would attempt to translate, [and] he would look into the hat in which the stone was placed, he found he was spiritually blind and could not translate. He told us that his mind dwelt too much on earthly things, and various causes would make him incapable of proceeding with the translation. When in this condition he would go out and pray, and when he became sufficiently humble before God, he could then proceed with the translation. Now we see how very strict the Lord is; and how he requires the heart of man to be just right in His sight, before he can receive revelation from him.

When the Book of Mormon was in the hands of the printer, more money was needed to finish the printing of it. We were waiting on Martin Harris who was doing his best to sell a part of his farm, in order to raise the necessary funds.[12] After a time Hyrum Smith[13] and others began to get impa-

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12. John H. Gilbert denied Whitmer's statement that the printing of the Book of Mormon had to be delayed for financial reasons (see III.H.9, JOHN H. GILBERT INTERVIEW, SEP 1888). Harris mortgaged his farm before the printing commenced, therefore the publisher had little reason to worry (III.L.14, MARTIN HARRIS MORTGAGE, 25 AUG 1829).

13. On Hyrum Smith (1800-44), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 12.

tient, thinking that Martin Harris was too slow and under transgression for not selling his land at once, even if at a great sacrifice. Brother Hyrum thought they should not wait any longer on Martin Harris, and that the money should be raised in some other way. Brother [p. 30] Hyrum was vexed with Brother Martin, and thought they should get the money by some means outside of him, and not let him have anything to do with the publication of the Book, or receiving any of the profits thereof if any profits should accrue. He was wrong in thus judging Bro: Martin, because he was doing all he could toward selling his land. Brother Hyrum said it had been suggested to him that some of the brethren might go to Toronto, Canada, and sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon for considerable money: and he persuaded Joseph to inquire of the Lord about it. Joseph concluded to do so. He had not yet given up the stone. Joseph looked into the hat in which he placed the stone, and received a revelation that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, and that they would sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon. Hiram page [Page][14] and Oliver Cowdery went to Toronto on this mission, but they failed entirely to sell the copy-right, returning without any money. Joseph was at my father's house when they returned. I was there also, and am an eye witness to these facts. Jacob Whitmer[15] and John Whitmer[16] were also present when Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery returned from Canada. Well, we were all in great trouble; and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copy-right, and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: "*Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil.*"[17] So we see that the revelation to go to Toronto and sell the copy-right was not of God, but was of the devil or of the heart of man. When a man enquires of the Lord concerning a matter, if he is deceived by his own carnal desires, and is in error, he will receive an answer according to his erring heart, but it will not be a revelation from the Lord. This was a lesson for our benefit and we should have profited by it in future more than we did. Without much explanation you can see the error of Hyrum Smith in think-

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14. On Hiram Page (1800-52), see introduction to VI.C.1, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM MCLELLIN, 30 MAY 1847.

15. On Jacob Whitmer (1800-56), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 98.

16. On John Whitmer (1802-78), see "Introduction to John Whitmer Collection."

17. Cf. D&C 47:7.

ing evil of Martin Harris without a cause, and desiring to leave him out in the publication of the Book; and also the error of Brother Joseph in listening to the persuasions of men and enquiring of the Lord to see if they might not go to Toronto to sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon, when it was made known to Brother Joseph that the will of the Lord was to have Martin Harris raise the money.[18]

... I will say here, that I could tell you other false revelations that came through Brother Joseph as mouthpiece, (not through the stone) but this will suffice. Many of Brother Joseph's revelations were never printed. The revelation to go to Canada was written down on paper, but was never printed.[19] When Brother Joseph was humble he had the Spirit of God with him, but when he was not humble he did [p. 31] not have the Spirit. Brother Joseph gave many true prophecies when he was humble before God: but this is no more than many of the other brethren did. Brother Joseph's true prophecies were almost all published, but those of the other brethren were not. I could give you the names of many who gave great prophecies which came to pass. I will name a few: Brothers Ziba Peterson,[20] Hiram Page, Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt,[21] Orson Pratt,[22] Peter Whitmer,[23] Christian Whitmer,[24] John Whitmer, myself and many others had the gift of prophesy. ...

After the translation of the Book of Mormon was finished, early in the spring of 1830, before April 6th, Joseph gave the stone to Oliver Cowdery

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18. Whitmer related the circumstances of the so-called "Canadian Revelation" in VI.A.29, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *OMAHA HERALD,* 10 OCT 1886. Hiram Page, one of those who went to Canada, corrects Whitmer in reporting that the party went to Kingston rather than Toronto (see VI.C.2, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM MCLELLIN, 2 FEB 1848; VI.F.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO JOSEPH SMITH, III, JUL & SEP 1872; and F.12, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO [JAMES T. COBB?], CIRCA 1881).

19. William E. McLellin reported to Joseph Smith III: "I have seen and read a copy of it, so that I know it existed" (VI.F.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO JOSEPH SMITH III, JUL & SEP 1872, 1).

20. On Richard Ziba Peterson (?-1849), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 105.

21. On Parley Parker Pratt (1807-57), see introduction to III.K.16, PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY (PART I), CIRCA 1854.

22. On Orson Pratt (1811-81), see introduction to I.A.16, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1839.

23. On Peter Whitmer, Jr. (1809-36), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 63.

24. On Christian Whitmer (1798-1835), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 96.

and told me as well as the rest that he was through with it, and he did not use the stone more.[25] He said he was through [with] the work that God had given him the gift to perform, except to preach the gospel. He told us that we would all have to depend on the Holy Ghost hereafter to be guided into truth and obtain the will of the Lord. The revelations after this came through Joseph as "mouth piece;" that is, he would enquire of the Lord, pray and ask concerning a matter, and speak out the revelation, which he thought to be a revelation from the Lord; but sometimes he was mistaken about it being the word of the Lord. As we have seen, some revelations are of God and some are not. In this manner, through Brother Joseph as "mouth piece" came every revelation to establish new doctrines and offices which disagree with the New Covenant in the Book of Mormon and New Testament! I would have you to remember this fact.

In June, 1829, the Lord called Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and myself as the three witnesses, to behold the vision of the Angel, as recorded in the fore part of the Book of Mormon, and to bear testimony to the world that the Book of Mormon is true. I was not called to bear testimony to the mission of Brother Joseph Smith any farther than his work of translating the Book of Mormon, as you can see by reading the testimony of us three witnesses.

In this month [June 1829] I was baptized, confirmed, and ordained an Elder in the Church of Christ by Bro. Joseph Smith.[26] Previous to this, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had baptized, confirmed and ordained each other to the office of an Elder in the Church of Christ. I was the third person baptized into the church. In August, 1829, we began to preach the gospel of Christ. The following six Elders had then been ordained: Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Samuel H. Smith,[27] Hyrum Smith and myself.[28] The Book of Mormon was still in the hands of the printer, but my

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25. E. D. Howe reported: "He [Smith] abandoned his spectacles, or 'peep stone,' and merely delivered it with his eyes shut" (Howe 1834, 102). Smith's brown seer stone was kept by Cowdery until his death in 1850, then taken to Salt Lake City by Phineas Young. It is presently in the First Presidency's vault (see Quinn 1987, 195-97). However, there is evidence that Smith afterwards occasionally used another seer stone (see Quinn, 197-99).

26. Smith's history mentions Whitmer's baptism in June 1829 but not his ordination (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 23). Some have interpreted Whitmer's apostolic calling, mentioned in a revelation received in June 1829 [D&C 18], as a possible indication of his ordination to the eldership (Cook 1981, 24).

27. On Samuel Harrison Smith (1808-44), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 13.

28. Whitmer's attempt to name the first elders in the church should not be

brother, Christian Whitmer, had copied from the manuscript the teachings and doctrine of Christ, being the things which we were commanded to preach. We preached paptized [baptized] and confirmed members into the Church of Christ, from August, 1829, until April 6th, 1830, being *eight months* in which time we had proceeded rightly; the offices in the church being Elders, Priests and Teachers. [p. 32]

Now, when April 6, 1830, had come, we had then established three branches of the "Church of Christ," in which three branches were about seventy members: One branch was at Fayette, N.Y.; one at Manchester, N.Y., and one at Colesville, Pa [New York]. It is all a mistake about the church being *organized* on April 6, 1830, as I will show. We were as fully *organized*—spiritually—before April 6th as we were on that day. The reason why we met on that day was this; the world had been telling us that we were not a regularly organized church, and we had no right to officiate in the ordinance of marriage, hold church property, etc., and that we should organize according to the laws of the land. On this account we met at my father's house in Fayette, N.Y., on April 6, 1830, to attend to this matter of organizing according to the laws of the land; you can see this from Sec. 17 Doctrine and Covenants: the church was organized on April 6th "*agreeable to the laws of our country* [D&C 20:1]."

It says after this, "*by the will and commandments of God;*" but this revelation came through Bro. Joseph as "mouthpiece." Now brethren, how can it be that the church was any more organized—spiritually—on April 6th,[29] than it was before that time? There were six elders and about seventy members before April 6th, and the same number of elders and members after that day. We attended to our business of organizing, according to the laws of the land, the church acknowledging us six elders as their ministers; besides, a few who had recently been baptized and not confirmed were confirmed on that day; some blessings were pronounced, and we partook of the Lord's supper.

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confused with the six founding members. However, he errs in any case since Samuel Smith was not ordained an elder until 9 June 1830 (see discussion in introduction to IV.A.4, JOSEPH KNIGHT, JR., STATEMENT, 11 AUG 1862).

29. Smith's history has six members in the church on 6 April 1830 (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 37). There were twenty-seven members on 9 June 1830 and sixty-two on 26 September 1830 (VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830 & 2 JAN 1831, under 26 September 1830). Whitmer seems to describe a later meeting than the church's organization (see discussion in I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 82; and introduction to IV.A.4, JOSEPH KNIGHT, JR., STATEMENT, 11 AUG 1862).

I do not consider that the church was any more organized or established in the eyes of God on that day than it was previous to that day. I consider that on that day the first error was introduced into the Church of Christ, and that error was Brother Joseph being ordained as "Prophet Seer and Revelator" to the church.

The Holy Ghost was with us in more power during the eight months previous to April 6, 1830, than ever at any time thereafter. Almost everyone who was baptized received the Holy Ghost in power, some prophesying, some speaking in tongues, the heavens were opened to some, and all the signs which Christ promised should follow the believers were with us abundantly. We were an humble happy people, and loved each other as brethren should love.

Just before April 6, 1830, some of the brethren began to think that the church should have a leader, just like the children of Israel wanting a king. Brother Joseph finally inquired of the Lord about it. He must have had a desire himself to be their leader, which desire in any form is not of God, for Christ said "*If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all* [Mk. 9: 35]." "*He that would be great, let him be your servant* [cf. Mk. 10:43]." "*For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great* [Lk. 9:48]." A true and humble follower of Christ will never have any desire to lead or be first, or to seek the praise of men or brethren. Desiring any prominence whatever is not humility, but it is pride; it is seeking praise of mortals instead of the praise of God. Joseph received a revelation that he should be the leader; that he should be ordained by Oliver Cowdery as "Prophet Seer and Revelator" to the church, and that the church should receive his words as if from God's own mouth [D&C 21:1-5]. Satan surely rejoiced on that day, for he then saw that in [p. 33] time he could overthrow them. Remember, "*Some revelations are of God; some revelations are of man, and some revelations are of the devil.*" God allowed them to be answered according to their erring desires. They were like the children of Israel wanting a king, and God gave them a king, but it was to their final destruction. He gave the church a leader, but it proved their destruction and final landing of the majority of them in the Salt Lake valley in polygamy, believing that their leader had received a revelation from God to practice this abomination. This was the first error that crept into the church. None of us detected it then. We had all confidence in Brother Joseph, thinking that as God had given him so great a gift as to translate the Book of Mormon, that everything he would do must be right. That is what I thought about it. You see how we trusted too much in man instead of going to God in humility, and to his written word, to see if we were proceeding rightly. It grieves me much to think that I was not more careful, and did not rely upon the teachings of Christ in the written word. But we were then young in

years, and all of us were mere babes in Christ. Brother Joseph and myself were only twenty-five years of age.

Although Brother Joseph was in this high office, he was humble most of the time, and he and all of us had the Spirit with us when we were humble, but as I have stated we did not have the Spirit with us in power as a body after this, as we did before April 6, 1830. After Sydney Rigdon came into the church—or in the spring of 1831—we began to make proselytes faster; but great numbers coming into the church does not always signify great *spiritual* prosperity. The people made light of the church in Noah's time, there was only eight members in it, but it proved to be the true church.

I want the brethren to understand me concerning this error of ordaining Brother Joseph to that office on April 6, 1830. Not at all do I mean to say that I believe the church was then rejected of God. What occur[r]ed on that day was this: One of the elders of the church (Joseph) was led into a grievous error; and the members acquiesced in it. In time it proved to be a most grievous error, being the cause of the trouble which afterwards befel[l] the people of God. They put their trust in Brother Joseph and received his revelations as if from God's own mouth. (Jer. xvii:5) "*Thus saith the Lord: cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm; and whose heart departeth from the Lord.*" This has been the great curse of the work of God in these last days. Nearly all of the church have continued to heed the words of men as if from God's own mouth—following man into one error in doctrine after another—from year to year—even on down into the doctrine of polygamy. ... [p. 34]

The next grievous error which crept into the church was in ordaining high priests in June, 1831. This error was introduced at the instigation of Sydney Rigdon. The office of high priests was never spoken of, and never thought of being established in the church until Rigdon came in. Remember that we had been preaching from August, 1829, until June, 1831—almost two years—and had baptized about 2,000 members into the Church of Christ, and had not one high priest. During 1829, several times we were told by Brother Joseph that an elder was the highest office in the church. In December, 1830, Sydney Rigdon and Edward Partridge came from Kirtland, Ohio, to Fayette, N.Y., to see Brother Joseph, and in the latter part of the winter they returned to Kirtland. In February, 1831, Brother Joseph came to Kirtland where Rigdon was. Rigdon was a thorough Bible scholar, a man of fine education, and a powerful orator. He soon worked himself deep into Brother Joseph's affections, and had more influence over him than any other man living. He was Brother Joseph's private counsellor, and his most intimate friend and brother for some time after they met. Brother Joseph rejoiced, believing that the Lord had sent to him this great and mighty man

Sydney Rigdon, to help him in the work. Poor Brother Joseph! He was mistaken about this, and likewise all of the brethren were mistaken; for we thought at that time just as Brother Joseph did about it. But alas! in a few years we found out different. Sydney Rigdon was the cause of almost all the errors which were introduced while he was in the church. ... In Kirtland, Ohio, in 1831, Rigdon would expound the Old Testament scriptures of the Bible and Book of Mormon (in his way) to Joseph, concerning the priesthood, high priests, etc., and would persuade Brother Joseph to inquire of the Lord about this doctrine and that doctrine, and of course a revelation would always come just as they desired it. Rigdon finally persuaded Brother Joseph to believe that the high priests which had such great power in ancient times, should be in the Church of Christ to-day. He had Brother Joseph inquire of the Lord about it, and they received an answer according to their erring desires.[30] Remember that this revelation came like the one to ordain Brother Joseph "Prophet Seer and Revelator" to the church—through Brother Joseph as mouthpiece, and not through the stone. Remember also that "*some revelations are of God; some revelations are of man; and some revelations are of the devil.*" ... [p. 35] ...

Now you have thought that because Brother Joseph was given a gift to translate the Book, that he could not fall into error; and you worship and give credit to *the man,* when all the credit is due to God. You should think of this matter. Brother Joseph did not write a word of the Book of Mormon; it was already written by holy men of God who dwelt upon this land. God gave to Brother Joseph the gift to see the sentences in English, when he looked into the hat in which was placed the stone. Oliver Cowdery had the same gift at one time [D&C 8 and 9]. Now when we look at it aright, the fact of Brother Joseph having the gift to translate the Book, is that any reason why you should put any more trust in him than any other man? Not at all. Is that any reason why he should be a man who could not fall? Not at all. As you see from what the Lord told him, he was a very weak man, and liable to fall even while translating the Book. "*How oft have you transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men* [D&C 3:6]. ★★★ *If thou art not aware thou wilt fall* [D&C 3:9]. ★★★ *Thou hast suffered the counsel of thy Director to be trampled upon from the beginning* [D&C 3:11]. ★★★ *Thou wilt again be called to the work; and except thou do this* (repent) *thou shalt be delivered up and become as other men, and have no more gift* [D&C 3:11]." (To translate.) I give you my testimony that the Lord had to chastise Brother Joseph time and

30. Whitmer was probably referring to D&C 84, which describes two orders of priesthood in the church.

again, as a father would a disobedient child, to help him through the translation of the Book. God knows that I do not mean to persecute Brother Joseph. As I have said, I loved him. I am not crying him down or preaching self-righteousness, but I desire to get you to comprehend the sin of trusting in an arm of flesh, by receiving Brother [p. 37] Joseph's revelations as if they were from God's own mouth, when some of his revelations conflict with the teachings of Christ in the two sacred books. I tell you brethren, you are trusting in an arm of flesh and being in blindness you cannot see it. ... [p. 38] ...

Now brethren of the Reorganization, you must accept this revelation on polygamy, or else you must lay aside the book of Doctrine and Covenants; for the commandment is, His word ye shall receive as if from God's own mouth. Words would not come from God to practice polygamy, and after his people had practiced it for some time, then the word come that the revelation was of the Devil, and to repent of it. So we see that the commandment to receive Brother Joseph's words as if from God's own month [mouth] was false. Now, this commandment is in the revelation given April 6, 1830, the revelation for Brother Joseph to be ordained Seer to the Church [D&C 21:1]. Now, can you not see that this revelation for Brother Joseph to be ordained Seer to the Church was false? Of course it was. There is no doubt about it. "Some revelations are of God; some revelations are of man; and some revelations are of the Devil." This is what God gave us through the stone in 1829 as I have before stated, for a warning to us all. The revelation given through Brother Joseph as mouthpiece on April 6, 1830, that he should be ordained Seer to the Church, after God had commanded him that He would grant him no other gift but to translate the Book of Mormon, I give you my testimony brethren that this revelation is not of God. ... [p. 41] ...

In June, 1829, Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery and myself, received this commandment through the stone, "Behold, I give unto you a commandment, that you rely upon the things which are written (then, at that time, June, 1829), for in them are all things written concerning my church, my gospel, and my rock [D&C 18:3-4]." This revelation reads this way to-day in the old Book of Commandments. But the Latter Day saints changed it in 1834 to read different in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. The revelations received through the stone in 1829, agree with the teachings of Christ in the Bible and Book of Mormon; but in order to support the errors which were afterwards introduced by men, some of the early revelations have been changed and added to, as I will show you in another chapter. In order to uphold these errors, your leaders claim that as the Book of Mormon is an abridgement of the Nephite records, containing only a small part of the things which Christ said and did, that it does not contain all the doctrines, laws, ordinances and offices which Christ meant to be in the church; there-

fore Brother Joseph's revelations are needed to establish other doctrines, laws, ordinances and offices that Christ left out of the Book of Mormon and the Bible, and out of the revelations when God first gave them in 1829. Oh the weakness and folly of man! How any person can be so blind in the face of all this evidence, as to still uphold the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, is more than I can understand. But there are none so blind as those who will not see.

You have changed the revelations from the way they were first given and as they are to-day in the Book of Commandments, to support the error of Brother Joseph in taking upon himself the office of Seer to the church. You have changed the revelations to support the error of high priests.[31] You have changed the revelations to support the error of a President of the high priesthood, high counselors, etc.[32] You have altered the revelations to support you in going beyond the plain teachings of Christ in the new covenant part of the Book of Mormon. You have changed and altered the revelations to support the error of publishing those revelations in a book: the errors you are in, revelations have been changed to support and uphold them. You who are now living did not change them, but you who strive to defend these things, are as guilty in the sight of God as those who did change them. ... [p. 49]

... Concerning the spiritual offices in the church, Elders, Priests and Teachers, with their duties as given in the Book of Mormon, they comprise the officers who are qualified to act in *all* spiritual matters, and there is no need of any more spiritual offices than these in the church, as we can plainly see from the scriptures. ...

The twelve at Jerusalem are called in the written word "Apostles." They are apostles because they were special witnesses to the sufferings [p. 50] of Christ, His death, burial and resurrection: but the twelve which Christ chose on this land are called disciples or elders, and are not once called apostles in the Book of Mormon. In the revelation which came through the stone in June, 1829, to Oliver Cowdery and myself to search out the twelve [D&C 18], they are also called disciples, and not apostles; and the revelation says

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31. The office of high priest was developed after June 1831, but references to the duties of high priests were added to a revelation dated June 1830 (cf. Book of Commandments 24:44-45//D&C 20:65-67).

32. The office of president of the high priesthood was first revealed in November 1831 (D&C 107:59, 65-69; see also Vogel 1988, 113-14; Cook 1981, 215-16, 326, n. 1). References to "president of the high priesthood" and "high councilor[s]" were added to a June 1830 revelation (cf. Book of commandments 24:44-45//D&C 20:65-67).

"disciples" in the Book of Commandments to-day. But it has been changed in the Doctrine and Covenants to read "apostles." The heading to this revelation in the Book of Commandments says: "Making known the calling of twelve 'Disciples' in these last days." In the Doctrine and Covenants it reads: "Making known the calling "of twelve 'Apostles' in these last days." ... [p. 51] ...

Now, brethren, I will ask you to read the early revelations that were given through the stone, up to June, 1829, and see if this matter is not just as I have told you; that they—or any other revelations—should never have been published, thus necessarily becoming public property for the eyes of the world. Also notice that they were given to individuals, to those whom God chose in commencing his work, for their individual instruction, and were not given to the church, and the church had no need of them. In the Book of Doctrine and Covenants they are sections 2 to 16 [D&C 3-19], inclusive. The headings over sections 4 [D&C 5] and 7 [D&C 8] are not like they are in the Book of Commandments, in which the headings show that they were also given to individuals. Section 4 [D&C 5] is a revelation given to Joseph Smith and Martin Harris. Section 7 [D&C 8] is a revelation given to Oliver Cowdery.

Now, bear in mind that these revelations were given through the "stone," while the Book of Mormon was being translated. The revelations in June, 1829, were given about the time the translation of the [p. 55] book was finished. As I have stated before, Brother Joseph gave up the stone a few months after translating the Book of Mormon. You can see from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants that the next revelation after June, 1829, is March, 1830, a period of nine months, and we had been preaching since August, 1829.[33] Now you notice that when the revelations began to come again, at the end of this nine months (this time through Brother Joseph as "mouthpiece"), they came thick and fast, and are of a different character to those given through the stone, which were given to individuals for their individual instruction in commencing the work. ... [p. 56] ...

In no place in the word of God does it say that an Elder is after the order of Melchisedec, or after the order of the Melchisedec Priesthood. An Elder is after the order of Christ. This matter of "priesthood," since the days of Sydney Rigdon, has been the great hobby and stumbling-block of the Latter Day Saints. Priesthood means authority; and authority is the word we should use.

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33. Whitmer's argument is somewhat diminished by his own account of the so-called "Canadian Revelation," which Whitmer claimed came through the stone, evidently sometime in the winter of 1829-30.

I do not think the word priesthood is mentioned in the New Covenant of the Book of Mormon. Authority is the word we used for the first two years in the church—until Sydney Rigdon's days in Ohio. This matter of the two orders of priesthood in the Church of Christ, and lineal priesthood of the old law being in the church, all originated in the mind of Sydney Rigdon. He explained these things to Brother Joseph in his way, out of the old Scriptures, and got Brother Joseph to inquire, etc. He would inquire, and as mouthpiece speak out the revelations just as they had it fixed up in their hearts. ... [p. 64]

... In June, 1829, the Lord gave us the name by which we must call the church, being the same as He gave the Nephites. We obeyed His commandment, and called it THE CHURCH OF CHRIST until 1834, when, through the influence of Sydney Rigdon, the name of the church was changed to "The Church of the Latter Day Saints," dropping out the name of Christ entirely, that name which we were strictly commanded to call the church by, and which Christ by His own lips makes so plain. ... [p. 73]

DAVID WHITMER.

RICHMOND, MO., April 1st, 1887. [p. 75]

34.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TRIBUNE*, 23 JANUARY 1888

"An Old Mormon's Closing Hours," *Chicago Tribune,* 24 January 1888.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On 23 January 1888, two days before David Whitmer's death, a correspondent with the *Chicago Tribune* interviewed Whitmer at his home in Richmond. However, much of the information came from previously published sources (cf. VI.A.26, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TRIBUNE,* 15 DEC 1885).

RICHMOND, Mo., Jan. 23.—David Whitmer, the last one of the three witnesses to the truth of the Book of Mormon, is now in a dying condition at his home in Richmond. Last evening he called the family and friends to his bedside, and bore his testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon and the Bible. He is past 83 years of age. Mr. Whitmer is an old citizen of this town, and is known by every one here as a man of the highest honor, having resided here since the year 1838. He is not and never has been a believer in polygamy. He left the Mormon Church in 1838 on account of their departure from the faith as he believes. His mind is still clear. He is in no pain whatever, but is gradually sinking, and death is expected every hour. ...

David Whitmer, who played an important part in the translation of the Mormon Bible, and who was one of the pillars of the church during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, was born in Pennsylvania, Jan. 5, 1805. During his early childhood his father moved from Pennsylvania up into Ontario County in New York, and settled on a farm in the vicinity of Watkin's Glen.

It was during the early part of June, 1829, that David first heard that a young man named Joseph Smith had found an exceedingly valuable golden treasure in the northern part of the county. In company with his brother-in-law, Oliver Cowdery,[1] young Whitmer set out to ascertain the truth or falsity of the story. Smith, who was at that time living with his father on a farm

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1. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

near Manchester, was indisposed at first to exhibit his treasure, but was finally persuaded to do so. The treasure consisted of a number of golden plates about eight inches long, seven inches wide, and of the thickness of ordinary sheet tin. They were bound together in the shape of a book by three gold rings. A large portion of the leaves were so securely bound together that it was impossible to separate them, but upon the loose leaves were engraved hieroglyphics which were unintelligible to any person who had seen them. With the tablets was an immense pair of spectacles set in a silver bow. Smith announced that he had been commanded to translate the characters upon the plates as soon as possible, and stated further that the work must be done in the presence of three witnesses. Smith, his wife,[2] Cowdery, and Whitmer then proceeded to the house of Whitmer's father, where the work of translation was carried out, Smith reading the characters by means of the magic spectacles, Cowdery, Christian Whitmer,[3] a brother of David, and Smith's wife acting as amanuenses. The work of translation occupied nearly eight months. Smith careles[s]ly tattled to the neighbors of the secrets which they were working out, and as a consequence the plates were taken from him by the angel of the Lord who in place of them gave him a Urim and Thummin of a different shape which he was to place in his hat and on covering his face with the hat he received straightway a direct revelation. After the completion of the translation David Whitmer became an ardent disciple of the new religion, and for some time preached throughout the neighborhood on its behalf. His efforts, and those of Cowdery and some others met with such success that a Mormon church was founded April 6, 1830, in which year the Book of Mormon was first published to the world. In the year following the church and its disciples moved to Kirtland, O[hio]., where Brigham Young[4] first joined the church. The original manuscript from which the Book of Mormon was printed has been in the possession of Mr. Whitmer from the time it was written. It is stated that the Mormon Church has of late years made strenuous efforts to induce Mr. Whitmer to part with it, but all offers made by them were steadfastly refused. ...

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2. On Emma Hale Smith (1804-79), see "Introduction to Emma Smith Collection."

3. On Christian Whitmer (1798-1835), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 96.

4. On Brigham Young (1801-77), see introduction to III.K.19, BRIGHAM YOUNG ACCOUNTS, 1855 & 1857.

35.
DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *RICHMOND* (MO) *DEMOCRAT*, JANUARY 1888

"The Last Witness Dead! David Whitmer, the aged Patria[r]ch, Gone to His Rest. His Parting Injunction to His Family and Friends. He Departs in Peace," *Richmond* (MO) *Democrat,* 26 January 1888; reprinted 2 February 1888.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Parts of this obituary and interview should be compared with VI.A.29, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *OMAHA* (NE) *HERALD,* 10 OCT 1886.

For many days past our aged fellow citizen, David Whitmer, lingered on the very brink of the grave waiting for the summons, but it did not come until yesterday evening, at 5 o'clock, when [his] spirit winged it[s] way into the infinite.

David Whitmer was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, January 7th, 1805, consequently in his 83rd year. He possessed a remarkably robust constitution which, added to his habit of activity and temperate living, prolonged his life beyond four score. He lived in Richmond about half a century, and we can say that no man ever lived here, who had among our people, more friends and fewer enemies. Honest, conscientious and upright in all his dealings, just in his estimate of men, and open, manly and frank in his treatment of all, he made lasting friends who loved him to the end.

When a youth he moved to Ontario county, New York. He was married to Julia Ann Jolly, on January 9th 1831, in Seneca county, New York. In 1832 he moved from that place, to Kirtland, Ohio.[1] In 1834[2] he came to Jackson county, Missouri, and in 1837 moved to Far West, Caldwell county, Missouri, and from there to Richmond in 1838, where he resided to the day

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1. Whitmer had moved to Kirtland by June 1831 (Cook 1981, 24-25).
2. Whitmer was in Jackson County, Missouri, by October 1832 (Cook 1981, 25).

of his death. He leaves a wife and two children, two grand children, and several great grand children.

It is well known that he was a firm believer in the bible, in the divinity of Christ and in the authenticity and divine character of the record of the Nephites, better known as the Book of Mormon.

He was the last to go of the three witnesses to "the divine authenticity of the record of the Nephites," and as the history of this Book of Mormon is not much known, we think this a fitting occasion to repeat what Mr. Whitmer has often said on the subject, taken in part from an article written by Joe Johnson of the Plattsburg Democrat.[3]

When he was 24 years of age and working on his father's farm near Palmyra, New York, all that section of the country was more or less excited over the reported discovery by Joseph Smith of the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. Oliver Cowdery,[4] the village school teacher, mentioned the matter to him and announced his determination to visit Smith and investigate the matter for himself, promising Mr. Whitmer, at the latter's request, to advise him of the result. A few days later he received a letter from Cowdery, urging him to join him, which he did, being received by the "prophet" with open arms. After remaining long enough to satisfy himself of

THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF SMITH

The three returned to Whitmer's home, where it was agreed that the work of translation should be prosecuted.

Shortly after his return, and while he was plowing in the field one afternoon, he was visited by Smith and Cowdery, who requested that he should accompany them into the woods on a hill across the road for the purpose of witnessing a manifestation that should qualify he and Cowdery to bear witness to the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, Smith explaining that such procedure was in accordance with explicit instructions he had received from

AN ANGEL OF THE LORD.

Repairing to the woods they engaged in prayer for a short time, when

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3. The following seven paragraphs should be compared with VI.A.29, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *OMAHA HERALD,* 10 OCT 1886. The item is incorrectly attributed to Joe Johnson of the *Plattsburg Democrat* (presently not available for comparison), having evidently reprinted it from the *Herald.*

4. On Oliver Cowdery, see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

suddenly a great light shone round about them far brighter and more dazzling than the brilliancy of the noon day sun, seemingly enveloping the wood for a considerable distance. A spirit of elevation seized him as of joy indescribable and a strange influence stole over him which so entra[n]ced him that he felt that he was chained to the spot. A moment later and a divine personage clothed in white raiment appeared unto them, and immediately in front of the personage stood a table on which lay a number of gold plates, some brass plates, the "urim and thummim" and the "sword of Laban." All of these they were directed to examine carefully and after their examination they were told that the Lord would demand that

THEY BEAR WITNESS THEREOF

To all the world. These plates were engraved with characters termed in the Book of Mormon "reformed Egyptian" characters unknown to the linguists of the present day, which is claimed as a fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah:

"And the word of the Lord has become unto them as the leaves of a book which are sealed, and which is delivered unto him that is learned, saying: Read this, I pray thee, and he sayeth, I cannot, for it is sealed," etc. [Isa. 29:11]

A slip of paper containing a fac simile of these characters, traced by Joseph Smith, was submitted to the celebrated Professor [Charles] Ant[h]on and others and all confessed their inability to translate them, recognizing in them characteristics of several ancient alphabets. This slip is still in Mr. Whitmer's possession and is cherished with the same sacred care that he bestows on the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon, which he also has.

While describing this vision to us, all traces of a severe cold from which he was suffering disappeared for the time being, his form straightened, his countenance assumed almost a beautified expression and his tones became strangely eloquent. Although evidently no studied effort, the description was a

MAGNIFICENT PIECE OF WORD PAINTING

and he carried his hearers with him to that lonely hill by the old farm and they stood there with him awed in the divine presence. Skeptics may laugh and scoff if they will, but no man can listen to Mr. Whitmer as he talks of his interview with the Angel of the Lord, without being most forcibly convinced that he has heard an honest man tell what he honestly believes to be true.

The result of this vision was a proclamation for the facts enumerated.

THE "URIM AND THUMMIM,"

Mentioned in the account of the vision were a pair of transparent stone spectacles. Smith would put on the spectacles, when a few words of the text of the

Book of Mormon would appear on the lenses. When these were correctly transcribed by Cowdery, who acted as his amanuensis, these words would disappear and others take their place. When one hundred and sixteen pages were completed, Smith entrusted them to Martin Harris,[5] to take to his home with a view to convert his family to the new faith. They were placed at night in a bureau drawer and next morning were missing, having been stolen. They were never found and never replaced, so that the Book of Mormon to-day is short that number of pages of the original matter. As a

CHASTISEMENT FOR THIS CARELESSNESS,

The urim and thummim was taken from Smith. But by humbling himself, he again found favor with the Lord and was presented with a strange oval-shaped, chocolate colored stone, about the size of an egg but more flat, which it was promised should answer the same purpose. With this stone all the present book was translated. The prophet would place the stone in a hat, then put his face in the hat and read the words that appeared thereon. This stone is the only relic of the prophet's work in existence which is not in possession of Mr. Whitmer. It was confided to Oliver Cowdery and preserved by him until his death in 1852 [1850]. After that event Phineas Young succeeded in getting it from Cowdery's widow and it is now among the sacred relics preserved at Salt Lake City.

He bore his long illness with great patience and fortitude, his faith never for a moment wavering, and when the summons came, he sank peacefully to rest, with a smile on his countenance, just as if he was being lulled to sleep by sweet music. Just before the breath left the body, he opened his eyes which glistened with the brightness of his early manhood. He then turned them toward heaven, and a wonderful light came over his countenance, which remained several moments, when the eyes gradually closed and David Whitmer was gone to his rest.

On Monday last at 10 o'clock A.M. after awakening from a short slumber, he said he had seen beyond the veil and saw Christ on the other side. His friends who were constantly at his bedside claim that he had many manifestations of the truth of the great beyond, and which confirms their faith beyond all shadow of doubt.[6]

On Sunday evening at 5:30, January 22, 1888, Mr. Whitmer called his family and some friends to his bedside and addressing himself to the attending physician, said: "Dr. Buchanan I want you to say whether or not I am in my right mind, before I give my dying testimony."

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5. On Martin Harris, see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."
6. This paragraph is missing in Cook 1991, 231.

The doctor answered: "Yes you are in your right mind for I have just had a conversation with you."

He then addressed himself to all around his bedside, in these words: "Now you must be faithful in Christ. I want to say to you all the Bible and the record of the Nephites, (Book of Mormon) is true, so you can say that you have heard me bear my testimony, on my death bed. All be faithful in Christ and your reward will be according to your works. God bless you all. My trust is in Christ forever, world[s] without end.—Amen."

It is proper to state the Book of Mormon, the manuscript of which Mr. Whitmer retained to the day of his death, strongly condemns polygamy and the practice of Utah Mormons. In 1879, Orson Pratt and other Mormon Elders came here and attempted to buy the manuscript, but Mr. Whitmer would part with it for no consideration, as he considered it his duty to retain it.[7]

In the spring of 1887, he published a pamphlet, setting forth his religious views, in which he strongly condemns polygamy and forcibly argues by giving scripture quotations, in favor of the Church of Christ, which is the name taken by all true believers in the record of the Nephites.[8]

His remains will be laid to rest to-morrow at the new city cemetery in Richmond. Mr. Whitmer was a very plain man and it was his desire that no display of any kind be made at his burial, hence the only ceremony will be a few appropriate remarks at his late residence.

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7. See VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878.

8. See VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887.

DAVID WHITMER ADDENDUM

In addition to the documents presented in this collection, the following brief, fragmentary accounts mention other occasions when David Whitmer related his testimony.

1. David Whitmer Testimony, 18 July 1831.

Reporting on a meeting near Paris, Illinois, on 18 July 1831, William E. McLellin recorded in his journal: "D[avid]. Whitmer then arose and bore testi=mony to having seen an Holy Angel who had made known the truth of this record to him" (William E. McLellin, Journal, 18 July 1831, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah).

2. David Whitmer Statement, Circa 1833.

John P. Green related an incident during the Mormon persecutions in Missouri: "When the mob again assembled they went to the houses of several of the leading Mormons. And taking Isaac Morley, David Whitmer, and others, they told them to bid their families farewell, for they would never see them again. Then driving them at the point of the bayonet to the public square, they stripped and tarred and feathered them, amidst menaces and insults. The commanding officer then called twelve of his men. And ordering them to cock their guns and present them at the prisoners' breasts, and to be ready to fire when he gave the word, he addressed the prisoners, threatening them with instant death unless they denied the Book of Mormon and confessed it to be a fraud; at the same time adding that if they did so, they might enjoy the privileges of citizens. David Whitmer, hereupon, lifted up his hands and bore witness that the Book of Mormon was the Word of God. The mob then let them go" (Greene 1839, 17).

3. David Whitmer Testimony, 21 August 1836.

Lumon Andros Shurtliff recalled that on the day of his baptism, 21 August 1836, in Kirtland, Ohio, he: "spent the afternoon in he=aring him [David Whitmer] relate things about the Angel sh=owing him the Plates from which the Book of Mo=rmon was translated I also asked him all the Questions I had wished to ask But I had read and herd it all and learned

nothing new" (Lumon Andros Shurtliff, Autobiography, circa 1852-1876, 72, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah).

4. David Whitmer Interview with Thomas B. Marsh, 1838.

About August 1838, Thomas B. Marsh left the church and moved to Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, where some of the Book of Mormon witnesses lived. He later wrote: "I saw David, John and Jacob Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery, who had all apostatized. I enquired seriously of David if it was true that he had seen the angel, according to his testimony as one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon. He replied as sure as there is a God in heaven, he saw the angel according to his testimony in that book. I asked him, if so, why he did not stand by Joseph? He answered, in the days when Joseph received the Book of Mormon, and brought it forth, he was a good man and filled with the Holy Ghost, but he considered he had now fallen. I interrogated Oliver Cowdery in the same manner, who answered similarly" (*Deseret News* 8 [24 March 1858]: 18; rept. *Millennial Star* 26 [25 June 1864]: 406; Cook 1991, 1).

5. David Whitmer Statement, Circa 1838.

According to an 1888 third-hand account of an anti-Mormon meeting in Missouri held about 1838: "David Whitmer arose, walked to the platform, and delivered a short but very telling speech. ... He then went on to say that no person had ever questioned his word to his knowledge about any other matter than finding the Book of Mormon. ... Why persons should question his word about the golden plates, when they took it in relation to all other matters, was to him a mystery" (*Chicago Times*, 26 January 1888; Cook 1991, 224).

6. David Whitmer Interview with David H. Cannon, 1861.

After attending stake conference in St. George, Utah, Charles Lowell Walker recorded in his diary: "Attended Conference [11 June 1894]. Br[other] Parker represented Virgen City Ward, after which D[avid] H Cannon occupied nearly all the time. ... He also bore a powerful testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon, having seen and heard the witnesses of the Book of Mormon testify to their having seen the Angel turn over the gold Plates and exhibit the engravings upon them, i.e., David Whitmer and Martin Harris, one in the Kirtland Temple and the other in Richmond Missouri, David Whitmer having the Manuscript Copy from which the Book of Mormon was printed" (Larson and Larson 1980, 2:773-74; Cook 1991, 219-20).

Recalling his 1861 interview with Whitmer, David H. Cannon said: "From there I went to Richmond, Missouri, and called upon David Whitmer, who was the other surviving witness. I told him my purpose and asked him questions similar to what I had propounded to Martin Harris. He showed me the manuscript from which the said Book of Mormon had been printed. I was sufficiently acquainted with printing to know that the manuscript had been in the hands of a printer, and he [Whitmer] also testified that an angel turned the leaves of the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, and as he turned them, testified that they contained a history of the ancient inhabitants of this continent, and that they had been translated by the gift and power of God" (Evans and Cannon 1967, 250).

In an autobiography, Cannon reminisced: "The thing which impressed me most of all was, as we stood beside the grave of Oliver Cowdery the other Witness, who had come back into the Church before his death, and [David Whitmer] in describing Olivers action, when bearing his testimony, said to the people in his room, placing his hands like this upon his head, saying 'I know the Gospel to be true and upon this head has Peter[,] James and John laid their hands and confer[r]ed the Holy Melchesdic Priesthood'" (David H. Cannon, Autobiography, 13 March 1917, 5, as quoted in Porter 1995, 10).

7. David Whitmer Interview with Davis H. Bays, 13 September 1869.

"I visited Richmond, the county seat of Ray, where, to my surprise, I found Bro. David Whitmer, one of the 'three witness[es].' He is now 64 years old and somewhat broken. He entertains some ideas of minor importance, which could not be considered orthodox; but so far as his faith in the Latter Day Work is concerned, he remains as firm as the everlasting hills" (*Saints' Herald* 16 [1 November 1869]; Cook 1991, 1).

8. David Whitmer Interview with Henry Moon, Fall 1871.

Speaking at General Conference in Salt Lake City on 9 April 1872, Bishop Henry Moon reported what he heard David Whitmer say, as follows: "God Almighty requires at my hands to bear record of the truth of the Book of Mormon. That book is a true record; it is the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, translated by the gift and power of God, through Joseph Smith" (*Deseret Evening News,* 10 April 1872; Cook 1991, 2).

9. David Whitmer Interview with James Caffall, August 1874.

In a letter to the editors of the *Saints' Herald,* James Caffall reported:

"Before I bade him [David Whitmer] good-bye, I said to him, 'Can I, Father Whitmer, say, I this day have seen a living witness to the Book of Mormon;' whereupon he raised his eyes heavenward, and said, 'AS MY TESTIMONY STANDS, SO IT IS; I HAVE NOT, NOR WILL I DENY IT'" (*Saints' Herald* 21 [15 September 1874]: 564; also *Journal of History* 3 [October 1910]: 454; Cook 1991, 4).

10. David Whitmer to Mark H. Forscutt, 2 March 1875.

"My testimony to the world is written concerning the Book of Mormon, and it is the same that I gave at first and it is the same as shall stand to my latest hour in life, linger with me in death and shine as Gospel Truth beyond the limits of life, among the Tribunals of Heaven, and [that] the Nations of the Earth will have known to[o] late the divine truth written on the pages of that book is the only sorrow of this servant of the Almighty Father" (David Whitmer to Mark H. Forscutt, 2 March 1875, Scrapbook, 16-17, present location unknown, photographically reproduced in I. Davis 1964, 75).

11. David Whitmer to James N. Seymour, 8 December 1875.

In a letter to the *Saints' Herald,* James N. Seymour quoted from a letter he had received from David Whitmer, who wrote: "As you read my testimony given many years ago, so it stands as my own existence; the same as when I gave it, and so shall stand throughout the cycles of eternity" (*Saints' Herald* 26 [15 July 1879]: 223-23; Cook 1991, 234-35).

12. David Whitmer to Heman C. Smith, 5 December 1876.

"Dear Sir: As concerning the Book of Mormon and its contents, and my views for which you inquire, I can say the Book and its contents are true. And my testimony in connection with the Book is also true" (David Whitmer to Heman C. Smith, 5 December 1876, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri; Cook 1991, 236-37).

13. David Whitmer to Joseph Smith III, 2 February 1878.

"My testimony to the Book of Mormon is true and I am admonished neither to add to nor take from my testimony already appended to the Book. And if I should do so must be extremely guarded under the risk of being misunderstood" (David Whitmer to Joseph Smith III, 2 February 1878, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri; Cook 1991, 237-38).

14. David Whitmer Interview with Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, 7-8 September 1878.

In a letter dated 18 September 1878, Orson Pratt wrote: "We ... had several interviews with David Whitmer—one of the three witnesses of the plates of the Book of Mormon. He showed to us the original manuscripts of the Book of Mormon mostly in Oliver Cowdery's handwriting. ... David would not sell the manuscripts for any price; he esteems them very sacredly, and would, for no earthly consideration, part with them. David gives the same solemn testimony that he did 48 years ago, but he has not progressed in spiritual things since he was dropped from the church" (Orson Pratt to Marian Pratt, 18 September 1878, Orson Pratt Correspondence, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City; Cook 1991, 46-47).

Joseph F. Smith reminisced in a discourse delivered 21 February 1892 in Provo, Utah: "I had the privilege of visiting David Whitmer a few years since and he related this incident. He said that with a glorious light a table was placed near by, on which lay the plates, the Urim and Thummim and the sword of Laban. The angel of God showed the engravings on the plates, and while the witnesses were examining the same, they heard the voice of God declaring that these were the plates translated by the power of the Almighty. When Martin Harris came back to them, they knew he had also seen the angel, because his face was radiant and he declared he had received the testimony. David Whitmer told me they knew he had also seen the vision which they had, because he explained what they had themselves seen" (Joseph F. Smith, 21 February 1892, cited in Stuy 1987-92, vol. 2).

15. David Whitmer Interview with William E. McLellin, June 1879.

"I saw him [David Whitmer] in June 1879, and heard him bear his solemn testimony to the truth of the book—as sincerely and solemnly as when he bore it to me in Paris, Ill. in July 1831. I believed him then and still believe him" (William E. McLellin to James T. Cobb, 14 August 1880, Independence, Missouri, William E. McLellin Collection, New York Public Library, New York, New York; Cook 1991, 240-41).

16. David Whitmer Interview with Jesse R. Badham, 20 March 1881.

"In Richmond, Ray County, Missouri. Visited David Whitmer the Remaining living witness to the book of Mormon—He bore a strong testamony—that An Angel Shewed him the book and the characters therein, and that the voice of God declaimed from the Heavens that it

was translated by the gift and power of God. That this ministration was not the only one by any means—that [a] messenger had come to him in the fields and he was prepared for the coming testimony" (Jesse R. Badham, Journal, 20 March 1881, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri; Cook 1991, 57).

"I have just been conversing with Elder David Whitmer, the last of the three special witnesses of the Book of Mormon. His testimony is still the same as we see appended to the Book of Mormon" (Jesse R. Badham to Joseph Smith III, *Saints' Herald* 28 [1 April 1881]: 109; Cook 1991, 57-58).

17. David Whitmer Interview with Edwin G. Woolley, Circa 1882.

"During our interview, Mr. Whitmer reiterated his testimony as given at the beginning of the Book of Mormon, saying that all he testified to there was true; that he had seen the plates and the Heavenly messenger, as he had stated" (Edwin G. Woolley, Diary, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Cook 1991, 80-82).

18. David Whitmer Interview with Joseph Smith III and Others, 4 April 1882.

"On April 4th, Bro[thers]. W. W. Blair, Pheneas Cadwell, James H. Peters and the Editor [Joseph Smith III], visited Richmond, Ray county, Missouri, for the purpose of paying our respects to David Whitmer, Senior, the surviving witness to the Book of Mormon. ... In answer to questions by the brethren he recited with graphic distinctness the scene in which he received the testimony he bore many years past and still bears to the Book of Mormon; and averred anew that the statement made by him as published in the book is true. No one who listens to him can doubt the sincerity and truthfulness of the man" (*Saints' Herald* 29 [1 May 1882]: 141; Cook 1991, 88-89).

19. David Whitmer Interview with John Morgan and Matthias F. Cowley, 13 April 1882.

"We had a long instructive conversation with him [David Whitmer] and listened with attention to him bear anew his faithful testimony to the divinity of the work and truth of the Book of Mormon" (John Morgan, Diary, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah; Cook 1991, 89-90).

"He bore a faithful testimony to the divine character of the Book of Mormon and related many incidents connected with the earliest history of the Church" (John Morgan to John Taylor, April 1882 [?], cited in Richardson and Morgan 1965, 323; Cook 1991, 90).

"We listened to him converse and in substance reaffirm with much assurance his testimony relative to the Book of Mormon" (Matthias F. Cowley, Diary, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah; Cook 1991, 91).

20. David Whitmer to S. T. Mouch, 18 November 1882.

"My testimony as published in connection with the Book of Mormon is true—And why Should men ask to know more in regard to all the particulars connected with that all Overshadowing truth—If they will not believe the three and 8 witnesses would they believe though one Should arise from the dead, and testify to its truth again" (David Whitmer to S. T. Mouch, 18 November 1882, Richmond, Missouri, Whitmer Papers, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri; Cook 1991, 241-42).

21. David Whitmer Interview with Moroni Pratt, S. R. Marks, and Others, 30 June 1883.

"Elders W. M. Palmer, S. R. Marks, D. F. Davis and myself accompanied by O. Shelby of Indiana, on June 30, visited David Whitmer at Richmond, Ray Co., Mo., and heard him bear testimony to the truth of his testimony as it is recorded in the Book of Mormon. His mind seemed clear and his recollection of things pertaining to the translation of the Book of Mormon, and the visitation of the Angel, and the voice of the Lord, seemed to be vivid and perfect. ... [W]hen giving his testimony he would straighten up, his voice would be firm, his eye would flash and one could feel that he spoke by the spirit of truth" (Moroni W. Pratt to *Bear Lake Democrat,* 3 July 1883, Covington, Indiana, *Bear Lake Democrat* [Paris, Idaho], 14 July 1883; Cook 1991, 93).

"In the morning, June 30th, Mr. [David] Whitmer visited us at the hotel. He is a fine looking, intelligent man and seemed pleased to [see] us. We interrogated him in regard to his testimony given in the Book of Mormon. Elder W. M. Palmer being the chief speaker, although questions were asked by Mr. Shelby and the Elders. He bore a powerful testimony to the divine authenticity of the book and the restoration of the Gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith, stating his testimony as given

in the Book of Mormon is absolutely true just as it is given there. He further stated that if that is not truth there is no truth; if there is no truth then there is no God and if there is no God there is nothing. He declared that the angel stood before him and he distinctly heard the voice of God declaring that the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and related many things that transpired in the early history of the Church, which was of great interest to us, and which adds another to the very numerous testimonies we have received of the divine mission of the great latter-day Prophet, Joseph Smith" (S. R. Marks to the *Deseret News,* 19 July 1883, Covington, Indiana, *Deseret News,* 21 July 1883; Cook 1991, 93-94).

22. David Whitmer Interview with J. Frank McDowell, 8 May 1884.

"On the 8th of May last, in company with our estimable young brother, 'Lettie' Brackenbury, went to the house of Bro. David Whitmer. ... We were then invited into the sitting room, where the aged friend reclined on a lounge, feeling somewhat indisposed. Then we talked about the invaluable plates, the angel's appearance, etc. He said: 'I saw the angel as plainly as I see you; he was surrounded by the glory of God, which overshadowed us, and we heard his voice, and we saw the records of the Book of Mormon,' etc. 'My testimony is the same as at the beginning, and is true'" (J. Frank McDowell to *Saints' Herald,* 22 July 1884, Olivet, Iowa, *Saints' Herald* 31 [9 August 1884]: 508; Cook 1991, 129-32).

23. David Whitmer Interview with Heman C. Smith and William H. Kelley, 19 June 1884.

In a letter to the editors of the *Saints' Herald* dated 28 June 1884, Heman C. Smith related an interview he and William H. Kelley had with David Whitmer on the 19th: "He [David Whitmer] informed us that at one time he was told by five hundred armed men that if he did not deny his testimony he should die; but in the face of death he affirmed the truth of his former testimony. He was with Oliver Cowdery in his last illness, and was by him admonished to never falter in his testimony of the Book of Mormon; for it was true" (*Saints' Herald* 31 [12 July 1884]: 422, cited in Smith, Smith, and Edwards 1968, 4:448-49; and Cook 1991, 132-34).

24. David Whitmer Interview with B. H. Roberts, 1884.

Following his 1884 interview with David Whitmer, B. H. Roberts reported: "It was my privilege to call upon him at his home a few years ago

and listen to his testimony. He stated that the Book of Mormon was true, that his statement in connection with that of Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris was strictly correct, he had nothing to add to it, nor to diminish from it" (*Contributor* 9 [March 1888]: 169; cf. *Millennial Star* 50 [20 February 1888]: 120).

On 5 October 1826, Roberts told a General Conference audience: "In my interview with David Whitmer, in 1884, ... he said to me that in the progress of turning the leaves, or having them turned by Moroni, and looking upon the engravings, Moroni looked directly at him and said: 'David, blessed is he that endureth to the end'" (*Conference Report,* October 1926, 126).

25. *Richmond Conservator* Statement, 9 January 1885.

"[David Whitmer] holds in his possession the manuscript from which the book of Mormon was published, he reiterates that he saw the glory of the angel, blinding him by its radiance, heard it proclaim 'You have testified to the truth'" (*Richmond Conservator* 31 [9 January 1885]; Cook 1991, 245).

26. David Whitmer to E. C. Brand, 8 February 1885.

"I did see the angel of God, and was commanded to testify of these things, and they are true" (*Kingston* [Missouri] *Times,* 23 December 1887).

27. David Whitmer Interview with Franklin D. Richards and Charles C. Richards, 22 May 1885.

"My father [Franklin D. Richards] did most of the visiting with Mr. Whitmer, while I sat quietly listening to them discuss the important events that transpired at Nauvoo; and, when I thought it would be permissible for me to do so, I said that we would appreciate being told, if Mr. Whitmer felt like telling us, some of the incidents connected with the vision he had at the time the plates were shown to him and to the other witnesses. Mr. Whitmer turned his large, kind, but penetrating eyes upon me and, in a very pleasant and considerate, but firm and steady voice said: 'Read the printed testimony of the three witnesses, which you will find on one of the front pages of the Book of Mormon—and I say to you that every word of it is true'" (C. Richards 1947, 13-14).

28. David Whitmer to Sister Gates, 11 February 1887.

"I would like very much to see you—and of course would tell you about

my vision of the Angel. You ask me if I saw the Angel when he brought the plates. I saw the Angel when he brought the plates, and the Angel told us that we must bear testimony to the world, as contained in my testimony written in the Book of Mormon. Doubt not—sister—the Book of Mormon is the word of God" (David Whitmer to Sister Gates, 11 February 1887, Richmond, Missouri, Whitmer Papers, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri; Cook 1991, 245).

29. David Whitmer to Robert Nelson, 15 February 1887.

"I did see the Angel as it is recorded in my testimony in the Book of Mormon. The Book *is true"* (David Whitmer to Robert Nelson, 15 February 1887, Richmond, Missouri, Whitmer Papers, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri; Cook 1991, 246).

30. David Whitmer Interview with Angus M. Cannon, 7 January 1888.

"[V]isited David Whitmer 83 years old that day. He said:—My friend, if God ever uttered a truth the testimony I now bear is true. I did see the angel of God and beheld the glory of the Lord and He declared that Record true. I felt I should be the last stranger to hear it" (Angus M. Cannon, Diary, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah; Cook 1991, 218-19).

"On the seventh of last month, (Jan. 1888,) Brother Cannon called on David Whitmer to hear his testimony. The old gentleman was then eighty-three years of age, and very feeble. He raised his hand and said: 'My friend, if God ever uttered a truth, I tell the truth now.' He then went on and told how he saw the glory of the Lord and heard the voice of the angel. His words were accompanied by the power of God" (*Deseret Evening News,* 13 February 1888; Cook 1991, 219).[1]

31. David Whitmer Dying Testimony, 22 & 23 January 1888.

"On Sunday evening before his death he called the family and his attending physician, Dr. George W. Buchanan, to his bedside, and said 'Doctor do you consider that I am in my right mind?' to which the Doctor replied, 'Yes, you are in your right mind, I have just had a conversation with you.' He then addressed himself to all present and said: 'I want to give my dying testimony. You must be faithful in Christ. I want to say

1. For a late thirdhand account of Cannon's interview with Whitmer, see Charles F. Solomon, Statement, 2 March 1952, reproduced in D. Cannon 1980, 298.

to you all that the Bible and the record of the Nephites, (The Book of Mormon) are true, so you can say that you have heard me bear my testimony on my death bed. All be faithful in Christ and your reward will be according to your works. God bless you all. My trust is in Christ forever, worlds without end. Amen.' On Monday morning he again called those present to his bedside, and told them that he had seen another vision which reconfirmed the divinity of the 'Book of Mormon,' and said that he had seen Christ in the fullness of his glory and majesty, sitting upon his great white throne in heaven waiting to receive his children" (*Richmond* [Missouri] *Conservator,* 34 [26 January 1888]; Cook 1991, 225-27).

32. John C. Whitmer Statement, September 1888.

While visiting Richmond, Missouri, on 12 September 1888, Andrew Jenson, Edward Stevenson, and Joseph S. Black interviewed John C. Whitmer, son of Jacob Whitmer, who stated: "I was also with Uncle David (Whitmer), who died here in January last, and heard him bear his last testimony in the presence of many witnesses whom he had called together for the occasion. He solemnly declared that the record of the Nephites, as he always called the Book of Mormon, was of God, and his testimony concerning it true" (Andrew Jenson, Edward Stevenson, and Joseph S. Black to *Deseret News,* 13 September 1888, *Deseret News,* 17 September 1888; rept. *Saints' Herald* 25 [13 October 1888]: 651).

33. George W. Schweich Reminiscence, 1899.

Whitmer's son-in-law, George Schweich, wrote to I. Woodbridge Riley on 22 September 1899, stating: "I have begged him [David Whitmer] to unfold the fraud in the case and he had all to gain and nothing to lose but speak the word if he thought so—but he has described the scene to me many times, of his vision about noon time in an open pasture—there is only one explanation barring an actual miracle and that is this—If that vision was not real it was HYPNOTISM, it was *real* to grandfather IN FACT" (George W. Schweich to I. Woodbridge Riley, 22 September 1899, in Riley 1903, 219-20; Cook 1991, 255-56).

34. J. L. Traughber Reminiscence, 1901.

Responding to several incorrect assertions of anti-Mormon writer Theodore A. Schroeder, J. L. Traughber wrote: "I have several times heard David Whitmer talk about the translation at his father's. He said there were several who wrote some at Smith's dictation. Among those I remember were [Oliver] Cowdery, the regular scribe, Mrs. [Emma]

Smith, John Whitmer, and I think David [Whitmer] himself probably wrote a few lines. I am sure he claimed that all those different hands are represented in the MS. ... [You say David] Whitmer said he knew that his MS. was written as Smith dictated 'through his hat.' This is not David's position. He said, 'By the seer stone.' When it is remembered that all the writing that was done at old Mr. Whitmer's was done inside the month of June, 1829, it is evident that David's statement that the greater part of the MS. was written at his father's can not be harmonized with another statement [of yours] that 'The boys [Smith and Cowdery] worked early and late, as it was slow work and they could translate only a few pages a day'" (J. L. Traughber to Theodore A. Schroeder, 21 August 1901, T. A. Schroeder Papers, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library, New York, New York).

35. Philander Page Reminiscence, 1907.

Following a 1907 interview with Philander Page, son of Hiram Page, George Edward Anderson recorded in his diary: "Was also present at the deathbed of David Whitmer. ... Sent for Dr. [George W.] Buchanan and [Whitmer] ask[ed] if he was of sound mind as he wish[ed] to reaffirm his testimony of the Book of Mormon. The doctor said he was perfectly rational. He reaffirmed his testimony to those present and counseled them to be faithful to their testimony of Book of Mormon and the cause of Christ and to the [Three] Witnesses' testimony of the Book of Mormon" (Diary, 27-28, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City, Utah, cited in Holzapfel, Cottle, and Stoddard 1995, 67, 70).

36. John J. Snyder Reminiscence, 1928.

"I was with David Whitmer in Richmond, Missouri, about one year, in 1886 and 1887, and during that time he told me he had never heard of the matter of John the Baptist ordaining Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to the Aaronic priesthood until 1838, after Joseph Smith's history appeared. And further, he told me he had never heard of the matter of Peter, James and John ordaining Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to the Melchisedec priesthood until 1838, after Joseph's history appeared. And he further told me he had never heard, until 1838, after Joseph Smith's history appeared, the story that he and Oliver Cowdery ordained each other on April 6, 1830. And he (David Whitmer) said he was present on that day (April 6, 1830), and the only ordination Joseph Smith had was that of Prophet, Seer and Revelator" (John J. Snyder, Affidavit, 10 October 1928, cited in Cadman 1945, 24-25).

B.

John Whitmer

COLLECTION

"John Whitmer," charcoal portrait ca. 1890s from photograph; artist unknown. Courtesy Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Missouri.

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN WHITMER COLLECTION

John Whitmer (1802-78), son of Peter Whitmer, Sr., and brother of David Whitmer, was born in Pennsylvania. Shortly after Joseph Smith's arrival in Fayette, New York, in June 1829, John's brothers David and Peter Whitmer, Jr, were baptized by Oliver Cowdery in Seneca Lake. Although not mentioned in Joseph Smith's history, John was probably baptized at that time (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 23; see also Cook 1981, 25). By the end of the month, John became one of the eight special witnesses to the Book of Mormon (see III.L.13, TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES, JUN 1829). On 9 June 1830, he was ordained an elder. Whitmer wrote extensively for Smith during the early years. Concerning his translation work at the Whitmer residence, the prophet mentioned that Whitmer "assisted us very much in writing during the remainder of the work," meaning that John Whitmer was one of the scribes during the Book of Mormon dictation (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 22).[1] Whitmer also assisted Smith in copying and arranging Smith's revelations in July 1830 and as a scribe during the early work on Smith's Bible revision.

Whitmer continued to be active in church affairs in Ohio and Missouri. On 8 March 1831, in Ohio, he was called as the church's first historian (D&C 47). Also in 1831, he and Oliver Cowdery were appointed to transport the revelations to Jackson County, Missouri, for publication. In 1834, Whitmer married Sarah Jackson, with whom he parented five children. On 8 July 1834, John was ordained a counselor to his brother David who was president of the church in Missouri. The following year he moved to Kirtland, Ohio, to become editor of the *Messenger and Advocate.* In July 1836, Whitmer returned to Clay County, Missouri, and, with W. W. Phelps, began to administer church affairs in Missouri independent of church hierarchy, locating a gathering place at Far West and identifying a new temple site. Because he had purchased land in his own name with church funds and without permission of the high council or church membership, he was excommunicated in 1838. After temporarily locating in Richmond, Missouri, Whitmer settled at

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1. Of John Whitmer, it is said: "it was his especial pride and joy that he had written sixty pages of the Book of Mormon" (*Saints' Herald* 26 [15 December 1879]: 370).

Far West, where he lived until his death on 11 July 1878 (Cook 1981, 25-26; McKiernan and Launius 1980, 9-23).

Of the eight witnesses, John Whitmer left the most on record even though he was brief or sparing in describing how he saw and handled the plates. He may have hinted that there was more to his testimony than implied in the official version when he reportedly stated in 1839 that the plates "were shown to me by a supernatural power" (VI.B.3, JOHN WHITMER TESTIMONY, 1839). The following collection gathers all of his known statements regarding both his testimony of the Book of Mormon and early Mormon history.

1.
JOHN WHITMER HISTORY, CIRCA 1836-1838

"The Book of John Whitmer kept by Commandment," 1-10, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Concerning his call to be the church's first historian, John Whitmer wrote: "I was appointed by the voice of the Elders to keep the Church Record. Joseph Smith Jr. said unto me you must also keep the Church history. I would rather not do it but observed that the will of the Lord be done, and if he desires it, I desire that he would manifest it through Joseph the Seer. And thus came the word of the Lord. ..." (McKiernan and Launius 1980, 56). Smith dictated the revelation that reads in part: "Behold, it is expedient in me that my servant John should write and keep a regular history. ... And again, I say unto you that it shall be appointed unto him to keep the church record and history continually" (D&C 47:1, 3; see also 69:2, 3, 7, 8).

Seven years later, apparently dissatisfied with Whitmer's slow progress, Joseph Smith and other church leaders in Missouri began preparing their own history of the church. On 9 April 1838, Sidney Rigdon, Smith's first counselor in the First Presidency, wrote to Whitmer from Far West demanding that he turn over his "notes": "Indeed Sir, we never Supposed you capable of writing a history, but were willing to let it come out under your name notwithstanding it would real[l]y not be yours but ours. We are still willing to honour you if you can be made to know your own interest and give up your notes, so that they can be corrected, and made fit for the press. But if not, we have all the materials for another, which we Shall commence this week to write" (Faulring 1989, 171). Whitmer evidently refused to comply with Rigdon's request.

A superficial reading of Whitmer's history has led some researchers to conclude that Whitmer wrote at least the first portion in 1831 (e.g., McKiernan and Launius 1980, 14). On the first page, for example, Whitmer states: "It is now June the twelfth one thousand eight hundred and thirty one years, since the coming of our Lord and Savior, in the flesh." There are also dated entries written in the present tense. For instance, chapter 10, which covers the church's activities in Missouri from October 1831 to November 1833, contains diary-like entries and phrases such as "at this time" and "at

present." However, Whitmer's use of the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants indicates that he only began turning his "notes" into a history sometime after that date (Howard 1982, 28). Because he initially ended his history with chapter 19 and the words "Farewell, March 1838" (chapters 20-22 subsequently added in different ink), Charles A. Davies of the RLDS Church concluded that Whitmer wrote the first portion before that date (Davies 1967, 168-69). It is possible that the history underwent several redactions before being written or copied into the bound volume. Whitmer's description of James J. Strang as Joseph Smith's successor in chapter 21, which he later struck out and replaced with an account of his brother David's claims to succession, would indicate that the chapters were written sometime before 1847. Thus, what is known as the "Book of John Whitmer kept by Commandment" is the final version of a record that probably passed through several phases over many years: compiling of notes beginning in 1831 and finishing touches on the history between 1835 and March 1838, the last three chapters having been added about 1847.

The history is recorded on the first ninety-six pages of a cloth-bound book of about three hundred unruled pages.[1] Following Whitmer's death in 1878, his history and other papers were given to his brother David, who willed them to his son David J. Whitmer. Later, these papers passed on to George W. Schweich, grandson of David Whitmer. On 18 April 1903, the RLDS Church purchased the Whitmer family documents from Schweich for $2,450 (McKiernan and Launius 1980, 23).

I shall proceed to continue this record,[2] being commanded of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, ~~to~~ to write the things that transpire in this church, (inasmuch as they come to my knowledge,) in these last days. It is now June the twelfth one thousand eight hundred and thirty one years, since the coming of our Lord and Savior, in the flesh.

Not many days after[wards,] my brethren, Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Jr.[,] Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson: Received a command-

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1. The text continues for ninety-six pages and then ends abruptly, two sheets (four pages) following page 96 having been torn out (McKiernan and Launius 1980, 22).

2. Prior to Whitmer's call on 8 March 1831, Oliver Cowdery had acted as Joseph Smith's secretary and kept a record of church affairs. According to Whitmer, "Oliver Cowdery has written the commencement of the church history, commencing at the time of the finding of the plates, up to June 12th, 1831" (McKiernan and Launius 1980, 56). The whereabouts of Cowdery's history is unknown.

ment of the Lord, through Joseph Smith, Jr., to take their journey to the Lamanites, and preach the gospel of our Lord and Savior, among them, and establish the church of Christ among them.[3] They journ=eyed as far West as the State of Ohio; and through the divine influences of the Holy Spirit, by the assistance of the Lord, they built a branch of the church, in Geauga Co.[,] State of Ohio, which consisted of about one hundred and thirty members.

And now it came to pass, that before they proceeded, on their journey from this place, there was a man whose name was Sidney Rigdon, he having been an instrument in the hands of the Lord of doing much good. He was in search of truth, conse=quently he received the fulness of the gospel with gladness of heart, even the book of Mormon, it being what he was in search after, notwithstanding it was some days before he obtained a witness from the Lord, of the truth of his work. After several days the Lord heard his cries, and answered his prayers, and by vision showed to him that this emanated from Him and must remain, it being the Fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, first unto the Gentiles and then unto the Jews.

Now it came to pass, after Sidney Rigdon,[4] ~~and~~ <was> received into this church, that he was ordained an elder, under the hands of Oliver Cow=dery.[5] He having much anxiety to see Joseph Smith Jr. the Seer whom the Lord had raised up in these last days. Therefore he took his journey to the State of New York, where Joseph Resided.

There was another man whose name is Edward Partridge,[6] [p. 2] who was also desirous, to see the Seer, Therefore, he accompanied Sidney, and journeyed with him, to behold this man of God, even Joseph Smith Jr. he being desirous to know the truth of these things: But not having confidence enough to inquire at the hand of God. Therefore he sought testimony of man, and he obtained it, and received the truth and obeyed the divine requirements, and was also ordained an Elder unto the church, to preach repentance and remis=sion of Sins, unto this idolatrous generation.[7]

Wherefore, after Sidney Rigdon had been at Palmyra a few days he

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3. See III.L.22, MISSIONARIES COVENANT, 17 OCT 1830.

4. On Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), who was evidently baptized on 8 November 1830, see introduction to I.A.13, SIDNEY RIGDON ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1836.

5. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

6. On Edward Partridge (1793-1840), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 193.

7. Partridge was baptized about 11 December 1830 in Fayette, New York, and ordained an elder on the 15th (Cook 1981, 53).

proclaimed the gospel,[8] in those regions round about, at which the people stood trembling and amazed, so powerful were his words, and some obeyed the gospel and came forth out of the water, rejoicing with Joy which is <unspeakable and> full of glory. From thence he journeyed to Fayette, where Joseph lived, and there he also proclaimed the gospel, ~~and~~ in the regions round about <and> there were numbers added.

Now in these days Sidney Rigdon was desirous to have the Seer enquire of the Lord, to know what the will of the Lord was concerning him. Accordingly Joseph enquired of the Lord, and these are the words that were spoken to him, saying:

[D&C 35; pp. 2-4][9]

Now, after the Lord had made known, what he wanted that his servant Sidney should do, he went to writing the things which the Lord showed unto his servant the Seer. The Lord made known, some of the hidden things of ~~the~~ his kingdom ~~of God~~; for he unfolded the prophecy of Enoch the seventh from Adam. After they had written this prophecy, the Lord spoke to them again, and gave further directions:

[D&C 37; pp. 4-5]

After the above directions were received, Joseph and Sidney went to the several churches preaching and prophesying wher=ever they went, and greatly strengthened the churches that were built unto the Lord. Joseph prophesied saying: God is about to destroy this generation, and Christ will descend from heaven in power and great glory, with all the holy angels with him, to take vengeance upon the wicked, and they that know not God. Sidney preached the gospel and proved his words from the holy prophets: and so powerful were their words, that the people who heard them speak were amazed, and trembled, and knew not whereunto this thing would grow. The advisary [adversary] of all righteousness being crafty, and beguiled the people, and stirred them up to anger against the words spoken, and has blinded their eyes, and is leading them down to darkness, ~~and~~ misery and wo! This generation abounds, in ignorance, superstition, selfishness, idolatry, and priestcraft, for this generation is truly led by priests, even hireling priests

8. It is known that Rigdon preached in Palmyra after meeting Smith in Fayette in early December 1830, but this is the only source to suggest that he preached in Palmyra on his way to see Smith.

9. The revelations, deleted here, were copied from an 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.

whose god is the substance of this world's goods which waxeth old and is beginning to fade away: who look for their hire every one from his quarter.

Because of the abominations that are abroad in the world, it is hard for those who receive the fulness of the gospel, and came into the new and everlasting covenant, <to> get clear of the traditions of their forefathers: and are to be made to believe the comma=ndments that came forth in these last days for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God, and the salvation of those who believe.

The time had now come for the general conference to be held. Which was the first of January 1831.[10] <and> according to this appointment the saints assembled themselves together. After [p. 5] transacting the necessary business, Joseph the Seer addressed the congregation, and exhorted them to stand fast, looking forward considering the end of their salvation. The solemnities of eternity rested on the congregation, and having previous=ly received a revelation to go to Ohio [D&C 37], they desired to know somewhat more concerning this matter. Therefor[e] the Seer en=quired of the Lord in the presence of the whole congregation, and thus came the word of the Lord saying:

[D&C 38; pp. 6-9]

After the Lord had manifested the above words, through Joseph the Seer, there were some divisions among the congregation, some would not receive the above as the word of the Lord: but that Joseph had invented it himself to deceive the people that in the end he might get gain.[11] Now this was because, their hearts were not right in the sight of the Lord, for they wanted to serve God and man; but our Savior has declared that it was impossible to do so.

The conference was now closed, and the Lord had manifested his will to his people. Therefore they made preparations to journey to the Ohio, with their wives, and children and all that they pos=sessed, to obey the commandment of the Lord. After these things were done Joseph and Sidney went to Colesville[12] to do the will of the Lord in that part of the land and to

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10. It was actually 2 January 1831 at the residence of Peter Whitmer, Sr., in Fayette (see VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830 & 2 JAN 1831).

11. See III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1828-1831, under 1 February 1831; and D&C 38:37.

12. If Whitmer is correct that Smith and Rigdon visited Colesville, New York, in January 1831 before leaving for Ohio, this would be their second visit to the area, having visited and preached there the previous December (see

strengthen the disciples in that part of the vineyard, and preach the gospel to a hardened and a wicked people, and it is fearful that they are all delivered over to the hardness of heart and blindness of [mind] [p. 9] so that they cannot be brought to repentance. For when Sidney and the Revelator arrived there, they held prayer meetings among the disciples, and they also held public meetings, but it was all in vain, they threatened to kill them. Therefore, they knew that they were not fit for the kingdom of God, and well nigh ripe for destruction. The Spirit of the Lord fell upon Sidney and he spoke with boldness, and he preached the gospel in its purity; but they laughed him to scorn, he being filled, with the Holy Spirit, he cried aloud ["]O ye heav=ens give in and ye angels attend, I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ that this people is sealed up to everlasting destruction.["] And immediately he left them and escaped out of their hands. And his enemies were astonished and amazed at the doctrine which he preached, for they taught as men having authority and not as hireling priests.

After[wards] Joseph and Sidney returned from Colesville to Fayette. The Lord manifested himself to Joseph the Revelator and gave commandment for me to go to the Ohio, and carry the commandments and revelations, with me, to comfort and strengthen my brethren in that Land.[13] ... [p. 10]

Permit me here to remark, that David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris, were the three Witnesses, whose names are attached to the Book of Mormon according to the prediction of the Book, who knew and saw, for a surety, into whose presence the angel of God came and showed them the Plates, the ball, the directors, etc. And also other witnesses even eight Viz., Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, John Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jr.[,] Hiram Page, Joseph Smith [Sr.], Hyram Smith, and Samuel H. Smith, are the men to whom Joseph Smith Jr showed the Plates, these witnesses names go forth also of the truth of this work in the last days. To the convincing or con=demning of this generation in the last day. [p. 26]

IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 8; IV.D.7, EMILY [COLBURN] AUSTIN AUTOBIOGRAPHY, 1882, 37-38; and IV.D.5, GEORGE COLLINGTON, SMITH BAKER, HARRIET MARSH, AND REBECCA NURSE INTERVIEWS WITH FREDERICK G. MATHER, JUL 1880).

13. On 18 January 1831, the *Painesville* (Ohio) *Telegraph,* announced: "A young man by the name of [John] Whitmer arrived here last week from Manchester, New York, the seat of wonders, with a new batch of revelations from God, as he pretended, which have just been communicated to Joseph Smith."

2.
JOHN WHITMER TESTIMONY, 1836

John Whitmer, "Address," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2 (March 1836): 286-87, 288.

EDITORIAL NOTE

In June 1835, John Whitmer became editor of the church's *Messenger and Advocate,* published at Kirtland, Ohio (see M&A 1:135-37). In March 1836, he informed readers that "in consequence of other business, and other duties which call my immediate attention, my labors in the editorial department of this paper must cease for the present" (2:285). In parting, he reaffirmed his testimony as one of the eight Book of Mormon witnesses.

... It may not be amiss in this place, to give a statement to the world concerning the work of the Lord, as I have been a member of this church of Latter Day Saints from its beginning; to say that the book of Mormon is a revelation from God, I have no hesitancy; but with confidence have signed my name to it as such; and I hope, that my patrons will indulge me in speaking freely on this subject, as I am about leaving the editorial department—Therefore I desire to testify to all that will come to the knowledge of this address; that I have most assuredly seen the plates from whence the book of [p. 286] Mormon is translated, and that I have handled these plates, and know of a surety that Joseph Smith, jr. has translated the book of Mormon by the gift and power of God, and in this thing the wisdom of the wise most assuredly has perished: therefore, know ye, O ye inhabitants of the earth, wherever this address may come, that I have in this thing freed my garments of your blood, whether you believe or disbelieve the statements of your unworthy friend and well-wisher. ... [p. 287] ...

JOHN WHITMER. [p. 288]

3.
JOHN WHITMER TESTIMONY, 1839

Theodore Turley, "Memorandums," 1845, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Theodore Turley (1801-71) was born at Birmingham, Warwickshire, England, converted to Mormonism (Jessee 1983, 35, n. 136), and became the church's business agent in Far West, Missouri, in 1839. On 4/5 April of that year, he confronted John Whitmer, who had left the church the previous year, and accused him of hypocrisy and faithlessness. In front of acquaintances who were antagonistic to the church, Whitmer reaffirmed his testimony of the Book of Mormon. Richard L. Anderson comments: "From the strict point of view of evidence, this report is most impressive. With social pressure to deny and personal motivation to explain away his experience, John Whitmer insisted that he had in fact handled the plates" (R. L. Anderson 1981, 131). What Anderson neglected to consider was Whitmer's qualification (not quoted by Anderson) that he saw the plates by "a supernatural power," which would suggest something other than a normal, physical experience. Indeed, it seems to imply that while Whitmer's handling of the plates (perhaps in a box or through a covering) was physical, his seeing the plates was visionary. Turley's "Memorandums" were used by Thomas Bullock in writing the official history of the church between February and March 1845 (see Book C-1, 913, History of the Church, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah; J. Smith 1948, 3:307-8; Searle 1981, 110, 112).

On the 4th[1] April 1839 8 men—Capt. Bogard [Samuel Bogart], <(who was the Co[unty] Judge)> Dr. Laffity, (John Whitmer and 5 others[)] came into the committee room and presented to ~~me~~ <Turly> the Messenger and Advocate[.] one of them opened to the Revelation of July 8, 1838 [D&C 118], to Joseph Smith—that the 12 [apostles] were to take their leave at the building in Far West on the 26th April to go to the "Isles of the Sea—" and asked him to read it. ~~I~~ <Turly> said, "Gentlemen, I am well acquainted with

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1. Joseph Smith's history dates this event to 5 April 1839 (see J. Smith 1948, 3:307-8).

it." they said, "then you as a rational man will give up Joseph Smith being a prophet and an inspired man. now he, and the twelve are scattered all over the creation. let them come here if they dare. if they do they will be murdered. as that revelation cannot be fulfilled, you will now give up your faith." ~~I~~ <Turly> jumped up and said "in the name of God that revelation will be fulfilled." they laughed ~~him~~ to scorn. John Whitmer hung down his head. they said "if they (the 12) come they will get murdered. they dare not come to take their leave here. that is like all the rest of Joe Smiths d<amne>d prophecies." they commenced on ~~me~~ <Turly> and said ~~I~~ <he> had better do as John ~~[-]~~ Corrill[2] has done he is going to publish a book called Mormonism fairly delineated[3][.] he is a sensible man and you had better assist him." ~~I~~ <Turly> said ["]Gentlemen[,] I presume there are men here who have heard Corrill say—'Mormonism' was true, Joseph Smith was a prophet and inspired of God &c. I now call upon you, John Whitmer. you say Corrill is a moral and good man[.] do you believe him when he says <the Book of> Mormon is true, or when [he says] it is not true, there are a many things published that they say is true, and again turn round and say it is false." [John] Whitmer asked[,] ["]do you hint at me?["] ~~I said~~ <Turly replied>, "if the cap fits you[,] wear it." all I know, you have published to the world that an angel did present those plates to Joseph Smith." ~~and he said~~ <Whitmer replied> "I now say [p. 2] I handled those plates. there was fine engravings on both sides. I handled them." and he described how they were hung[,] ["]and they were shown to me by a supernatural power.["] he acknowledged all. ~~I~~ <Turly> asked him[,] ["]why the translation is not <now> true?["] he said[,] "I cannot read it [in the original] and I do not know whether it [i.e., the translation] is true or not." ~~he~~ <Whitmer> testified all this in the presence of 8 men. ...

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2. John Corrill (1794-1843) was born at Barre, Worcester County, Massachusetts. He was living in Harpersville, Ashtabula County, Ohio, when he converted to Mormonism in 1830. The following year, he moved to Jackson County, Missouri, where he served as second counselor to Bishop Edward Partridge. Following John Whitmer's apostasy in 1838, he was appointed Church Historian. He died at Quincy, Illinois (Jessee 1989, 480-81; Cook 1981, 68-69).

3. Instead, Corrill published *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints* ... (St. Louis, Missouri: by the Author, 1839).

4.
JOHN WHITMER TO MARK H. FORSCUTT, 5 MARCH 1876

John Whitmer to Mark H. Forest [Forscutt], 5 March 1876, Whitmer Papers, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Mark H. Forscutt (1834-1903) was born at Godmanchester, England, converted to Mormonism, and in 1860 immigrated to Utah, where he served as a private secretary to Brigham Young for four years. On 1 January 1865, Forscutt was baptized into the RLDS Church and resided in Plano, Illinois, until 1872, then at Canton, Illinois, to 1876, and moved to Nebraska City, Nebraska, in September 1876, where he remained until 1879. He lived briefly in Shenandoah, Iowa, and St. Joseph, Missouri, then Nebraska City again beginning in 1895. He is remembered for editing the RLDS hymnal and authoring several of its songs. He died in Nebraska City (*Saints' Herald,* 50:1046, 81:399; Smith, Smith, and Edwards 1968, 6:78-79).

In 1876 he wrote a letter of inquiry, evidently from Canton, Illinois, to John Whitmer in Far West, Missouri. At the end of the letter Whitmer wrote in response, a statement by E. C. Brand was attached testifying that the Book of Mormon witness had remained true to his testimony (see "John Whitmer Addendum" for Brand's statement).

Far West March 5, [18]76
Mark H Forest / Esq.

Dear Sir[:] Yours came duly to hand 4. Inst. and the contents considered.

I hasten to answer according to best of my information at hand.

Mrs. Cowdery[1] Resides some place in Colorado. The address is mislaid, or I would give it.

However, I think I am able to answer your inquiries to your satisfaction

Oliver Cowdery lived in Richmond Mo. some 40 miles from here at

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1. On Oliver Cowdery's widow, Elizabeth Ann (Whitmer) Cowdery (1815-92), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 106.

the time of his Death. I went to see him and was with him for some days previous to his demise.

I have Never heard him deny the truth of his testimony of the [p. 1] Book of Mormon under any circumstances what ever.

I have no knowledge that there was any effort made to force him to deny the Book of Mormon. Neither do I believe that he would have denied at the peril of his life, so firm was he that he could not be moved to deny what he has affirmed to be <a> divine Revelation from God.

I desire to do good when it is in my power. I have never heard that any one of the three, or eight witnesses ever denied the testimony that they have borne to the Book as published in the first edition of the Book of Mormon

There are only two of the witnesses to that Book now living to wit. David Whitmer[2] one of the three and [myself,] John Whitmer[,] one [p. 2] of the eight

Our names have gone forth to all Nations tongues and People as a Divine Revelation from God. And it will bring to pass the designs of God according to the declaration there=in contained, &c.

Yours Respectfully,
[s] John Whitmer

2. On David Whitmer (1805-88), see "Introduction to David Whitmer Collection."

5.
JOHN WHITMER TO HEMAN C. SMITH, 11 DECEMBER 1876

John Whitmer to Heman C. Smith, 11 December 1876, Artificial Collection, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.[1]

EDITORIAL NOTE

Heman C. Smith (1850-1919), son of Spencer and Anna C. (Wright) Smith, was born at Zodiac, Texas, and was baptized into the RLDS Church on 7 October 1862, ordained an apostle on 30 March 1888, and appointed Church Historian in 1897. He was released from the Apostleship in April 1909 and later died at Independence, Missouri (*Saints' Herald,* 66:285-86).

Far West, December 11th [18]76

H. C. Smith Esq.

Dear Sir: Your letter came to hand, and your requests considered. First. As for giving all particulars that I know of the Book of Mormon, could not be written on one sheet of paper; therefore, permit me to be brief.

Second. From what you have written, I conclude you have read the Book of Mormon, together with the testimonies that are thereto attached; in which testimonies you read my name subscribed as one of the Eight witnesses to said Book. That testimony was, is, and will be true henceforth and forever.

Respectfully yours
John Whitmer

1. Whitmer's letter to Heman C. Smith was published in Smith and Smith 1897-1903, 1:57.

6.
JOHN WHITMER TESTIMONY, 1878

"I. C. Funn," [John Whitmer Testimony], *Kingston* (MO) *Sentinel,* ca. January 1878, reprinted in the *Saints' Herald* 25 (15 February 1878): 57.

EDITORIAL NOTE

An unknown writer who signed his name "I. C. Funn," reported on a public discourse in which John Whitmer affirmed his testimony of the Book of Mormon. The *Herald* stated that the item was reprinted from the Kingston, Missouri, *Sentinel,* which probably refers to the *Caldwell County Sentinel* published at Kingston, Missouri. Because surviving copies of this paper are extremely rare, I have been unable to locate the original article. That Whitmer delivered a speech on 13 January 1878 is verified in an independent letter also published in the *Saints' Herald* 25 (15 February 1878): 58.

The reporting seems distorted without separating Whitmer's special testimony from the times he "often handled" the plates, which probably refers to occasions when Smith allowed certain persons to handle the plates covered by a cloth or in a box. Moreover, it does not refer directly to the occasion on which Whitmer became a special witness to the Book of Mormon plates, nor does it credit Whitmer's description of the plates to his personal experience.

We were down to the Whitmer school-house to preaching on last Sabbath at eleven o'clock. Mr. John Whitmer delivered the discourse. It will be remembered by a great many readers, that Mr. Whitmer is one of only two now living that helped (were witnesses) to the translation of the Book of Mormon, or generally known as the Mormon Bible. Mr. Whitmer is considered a truthful, honest and law abiding citizen by this community, and consequently, his appointment drew out a large audience. Mr. Whitmer stated that he had often handled the identical *golden plates* which Mr. Smith received from the hand of the angel, he said it was of pure gold, part of the book was sealed up solid, the other part was open and it was this part which was translated, and is termed to-day the Mormon Bible. This is the first time Mr. Whitmer has attempted to preach for a good many years; and time, who waits for no one, has written many a furrow upon his brow. He is upwards of sixty years old, and gave some good advice to both old and young. Before closing he asked the audience if they would take the Book of Mormon and

the Bible and compare them, and to take Paul's rule, "To prove all things and hold fast to that which is good," in comparing them.

I. C. FUNN.

7.
JOHN WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH P. WILHELM POULSON, APRIL 1878

P. Wilhelm Poulson to Editors, 31 July 1878, *Deseret Evening News,* 6 August 1878.

EDITORIAL NOTE

John Whitmer was dead when this account was published. It should be remembered that John's brother David questioned the accuracy of Poulson's interview with him the same year (see VI.A.6, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH P. WILHELM POULSON, CIRCA APR 1878). In fact, portions of Poulson's account conflict with other more reliable sources (see notations below).

Ovid City, Idaho,
July 31, 1878.

Editors Deseret News:

I received, today, a letter from Miss Sarah Whitmer,[1] at Far West, Missouri, in which she informs me about the death of her father, John Whitmer, Esq., one of the eight witnesses to the plates from which the Book of Mormon is translated. She writes:

"I seat myself to a painful task, this morning to inform you of the death of my dear father, who departed earthlife, the 11th day of this month (July). Father's disease was congestion of the lungs, heart and stomach. He died very easy. I have the great consolation in knowing that he was prepared to meet his God.

"He asked only a few days before his death when I thought you would come. He always felt so very anxious only to see you again.

"I visited Richmond directly after the storm, and it was a sad-looking

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1. Sarah Elizabeth born to John and Sarah (Jackson) Whitmer on 5 October 1837 at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She married James Edward Johnson in 1856 and C. W. Kerr in 1882 (Family Group Record, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah).

sight to behold. Uncle David (David Whitmer,[2] one of the three witnesses,) has about recovered from his injuries, and is out once more on the street."

So far from Sarah Whitmer's letter. I visited this last one of the eight witnesses in April this year, at his fine residence at Far West. On John's farm is located the foundation of [the] Far West Temple, and the cornerstone is laid of gray sandstone. A short distance from John Whitmer's residence we discover the house in which the Prophet Joseph Smith dwelt with his family, and in the adjoining county is the beautiful valley, Adam-ondi-Ahman. John Whitmer received me as a dear father would receive a son, and answered readily all my questions. I said: I am aware that your name is affixed to the testimony in the Book of Mormon, that you saw the plates?

He—It is so, and that testimony is true.

I—Did you handle the plates with your hands?

He—I did so!

I—Then they were a material substance?

He—Yes, as material as anything can be.

I—They were heavy to lift?

He—Yes, and as you know gold is a heavy metal, they were very heavy.

I—How big were the leaves?

He—So far as I recollect, 8 by 6 or 7 inches.

I—Were the leaves thick?

He—Yes, just so thick, that characters could be engraven on both sides.

I—How were the leaves joined together?

He—In three rings, each one in the shape of a D with the straight line towards the centre.

I—In what place did you see the plates.

He—In Joseph Smith's house; he had them there.[3]

I—Did you see them covered with a cloth?

He—No. He handed them uncovered into our hands, and we turned the leaves sufficient to satisfy us.

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2. On David Whitmer (1805-88), see "Introduction to David Whitmer Collection."

3. Poulson's account is not only unique but contradicted by other sources. Lucy Smith, for example, said: "They all[,] that is the male part of the company[,] repaired to a little grove where it was custom=ary for the family to offer up their secret prayers. as Joseph had been instructed that the plates would be carried there by one of the ancient Nephites. Here <it> was that those 8 witnesses recorded in the Book of Mormon looked upon the plates and handled them of which they bear witness" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:102).

I—Were you all eight witnesses present at the same time?

He—No. At that time Joseph showed the plates to us, we were four persons, present in the room, and at another time he showed them to four persons more.[4]

John Whitmer was about 77 years of age. He told me that he should not live and see the coming of Christ nor the restoration of Zion in Jackson County, Mo. That Joseph Smith gave him once the following blessing:

"Thou shall live to good old age, and shall walk over the ashes of all thy enemies. Then you shall sleep with your fathers, and meet the Lord, when he cometh in the clouds."

Now, said John Whitmer, I have lived to a good old age, and I have walked over the ashes of every single one of all my enemies.

We say farewell to one of those who wrote part of the Book of Mormon from the dictation of the Prophet's voice and one of the eight witnesses. He was firm as a rock in his faith, and when Joseph Smith [III], living in Plano [Illinois], sent word to John Whitmer to reaffirm his testimony, his answer was: "I have never recalled it, and I have nothing to reaffirm."

In regard to joining the Church, he said, "I have a testimony within me, that testimony I got when I was raised up as a witness—that testimony has never left my bosom, it is by me to this day, and I am in the very place where I have to be, according to the Book of Mormon, which is the law that came out from Zion, which center stake is never to be taken away from here, in Jackson County, Mo." He had a firm and most absolute faith in the restoration and triumph of Zion on this continent, and the building of temples in Independence and Far West, Mo.

John Whitmer was in possession of copies from the plates, with the translation below, and showed that to me,[5] and also of other valuable records. I shall correspond with Sarah Whitmer, and hope she will be willing, with the permission of David Whitmer, to restore those documents to the Church.

Yours truly,
P. Wilhelm Poulson, M.D.

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4. This is the only known claim that the eight viewed the plates on separate occasions.

5. If Poulson refers to the Anthon transcript, there is presently no document with an English translation below the characters, and there probably never was (V.E.2, BOOK OF MORMON CHARACTERS, DEC 1827-FEB 1828). Charles Anthon specifically said that "no translation had been furnished (V.D.2, CHARLES ANTHON TO E. D. HOWE, 17 FEB 1841).

JOHN WHITMER ADDENDUM

The following is a collection of John Whitmer's statements about early Mormonism or reiterations of his testimony of the Book of Mormon that are too brief to warrant special treatment.

1. John Whitmer Testimony, 7 June 1835.

> "Elder John Whitmer took the lead in the services of the afternoon, and gave a short relation of the facts connected with the translation of the book of Mormon. On reflecting how many foolish reports are in circulation on this subject, and how many there are who are vain enough to believe them, I could not but wish that such were present, while Elder Whitmer was delivering his address. A thousand things may be conjectured, but when a man declares openly, candidly, and seriously, of what he has seen, hefted and handled with his own hands, and that in the presence of a God who sees and knows the secrets of the heart, no man possessed of common reason and common sense, can doubt, or will be so vain as to dispute" (Oliver Cowdery, Conference Report, *Messenger and Advocate* 1 [June 1835]: 143).

2. John Whitmer Interview with E. C. Brand, 1875.

> "I visited Mr John Whitmer at his residence at Far West, Caldwell Co., Mo., on the 18th of February, 1875. He also bore his testimony to me concerning the truth, and declared that his testimony, as found in the 'Testimony of Eight Witnesses,' in the Book of Mormon, is strictly true. He showed me a fac=simile of the characters of the plates, copied from the plates in the handwriting of Joseph Smith. Both of these men (David and John) are respectable, and looked up to as truthful, honorable men, in the vicinity where they live. The above is a brief and correct statement of my interview with them" ("Visit of E. C. Brand to John Whitmer," 18 February 1875, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri. This statement is apparently in the hand of E. C. Brand and appears at the end of the letter of John Whitmer to Mark H. Forscutt, 5 March 1876; see VI.B.4, JOHN WHITMER TO MARK H. FORSCUTT, 5 MAR 1876).

3. John Whitmer Interview with William Lewis and Others, 1877.

> "[W]e called to see Father John Whitmer. ... Father Whitmer says that

he hopes that God will give him strength to stand firm to the testimony" (William Lewis to Editors, 29 November 1877, *Saints' Herald* 24 [15 December 1877]: 381).

4. John Whitmer Interview with Myron H. Bond, Winter 1877-78.

"[O]ld Father Whitmer told me last winter, with tears in his eyes, that he knew as well as he knew he had an existence that Joseph translated the ancient writing which was upon the plates, which he 'saw and handled,' and which, as one of the scribes, he helped to copy, as the words fell from Joseph's lips, by supernatural or almighty power" (Myron H. Bond to Editors, 2 August 1878, *Saints' Herald* 25 [15 August 1878]: 253).

5. John C. Whitmer Reminiscence, 13 September 1888.

When interviewed by Andrew Jenson, Edward Stevenson, and Joseph S. Black, John C. Whitmer, son of Jacob Whitmer, said: "Of my Uncle John (Whitmer) I will say that I was with him a short time before he died at Far West, Missouri, when he confirmed to me what he had done so many times previously that he knew the Book of Mormon was true" (Andrew Jenson, Edward Stevenson, and Joseph S. Black to Editor, *Deseret News,* 17 September 1888, 2; rept. *Saints' Herald* 35 [13 October 1888]: 651).

6. Philander Page Reminiscence, 1907.

After visiting with Philander Page, son of Hiram Page, in 1907, George Edward Anderson recorded in his diary: "[Philander Page was] With John Whitmer during his last sickness, about a week. [Whitmer] Was firm to his testimony of the Book of Mormon, and it was frequently referred to during his last illness" (Diary, 28, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City, Utah, cited in Holzapfel, Cottle, and Stoddard 1995, 70).

C.
Miscellaneous Whitmer Family COLLECTION

1.
HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN, 30 MAY 1847

Hiram Page to William E. McLellin, 30 May 1847, *Ensign of Liberty* (Kirtland, Ohio) 1 (January 1848): 63.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Hiram Page (1800-52), a physician and farmer, was born in Vermont and at some point moved to Fayette, where he married Catherine Whitmer, daughter of Peter Whitmer, Sr., on 10 November 1825. In June 1829, he became one of the eight witnesses to the Book of Mormon, but was not baptized until 11 April 1830. On 9 June 1830, he received his teacher's license. For a time he received revelations through a seer stone, which Joseph Smith denounced as satanic (D&C 28). He moved to Ohio in 1831, then to Missouri in 1832, where he was probably ordained a high priest. After 1836 he located at Far West, Missouri, and following the excommunication of several of the Whitmer family in 1838, withdrew from the church. Soon after, Page located himself on a farm near Excelsior Springs, Ray County, Missouri, where he remained until his death (Cook 1981, 40). In the following letter to William E. McLellin,[1] dated 30 May 1847, he reaffirms his testimony of the Book of Mormon, although he fails to give details of the event.

RAY COUNTY, MO., May 30, [18]47.

Bro. William:—Yours of May 4th, came to hand the 28th, and it is so full of questions, and of such magnitude, that my little sheet will only give room for an introduction, and the plain simple truth is always the best without exaggeration. ...

In the next place, you want to know my faith relative to the book of Mormon, and the winding up of wickedness. As to the book of Mormon, it would be doing injustice to myself, and to the work of God of the last days, to say that I could know a thing to be true in 1830, and know the same thing to be false in 1847. To say my mind was so treacherous that I had forgotten what I saw. To say that a man of Joseph's ability, who at that time did not know

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1. On William E. McLellin (1806-83), see introduction to III.K.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO SAMUEL MCLELLIN, 4 AUG 1832.

how to pronounce the word Nephi, could write a book of six hundred pages, as correct as the book of Mormon, without supernatural power. And to say that those holy Angels who came and showed themselves to me as I was walking through the field, to confirm me in the work of the Lord of the last days—three of whom came to me afterwards and sang an hymn in their own pure language[2]; yea, it would be treating the God of heaven with contempt, to deny these testimonies, with too many others to mention here. ...

I am yours in the bonds of truth.

HIRAM PAGE.

2. It is unknown what event Page alludes to here.

2.
HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN, 2 FEBRUARY 1848

Hiram Page to William E. McLellin, 2 February 1848, typescript, Accretion Papers, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

EDITORIAL NOTE

The original letter of Hiram Page,[1] which became part of the RLDS Church's Library-Archives in the 1930s, was stolen about 1985. The RLDS archives recently obtained a photocopy of the original letter from a private researcher, from which the following transcription was prepared.

Fishingriver [Missouri], Feb. 2, 1848

Brother Wm:[2]

I feel it my duty at least to answer your letter of Dec. 30th which I have had the pleasure of perusing and another directed to me and David of Jan. 16th, 1848 but I feel it my duty to answer that of Jan. 16th as that is of the most importance. I received your last the 12th of Feb. and we held council on the 13th[,] it was solemn and the powers of darkness were dispersed and the subject of your letter was fairly investigated.

... when Joseph was first visited by the angel and had the promise of the plates, it was told him no one should have them to get gain and in concequence of not being satisfied with wisdom from on high by the mouth of the angel he was deprived of the privilege of obtaining those plates for 2 years.[3] here we find Joseph erred by his over anxious desire for filthy lucre, again we find in conciquence of the same caus[e] he lost the 116 pages of the first of his translating,[4] he did not think of the Savors admonition; take no

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1. On Hiram Page (1800-1852), see introduction to VI.C.1, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM MCLELLIN, 30 MAY 1847.

2. On William E. McLellin (1806-1883), see introduction to III.K.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO SAMUEL MCLELLIN, 4 AUG 1832.

3. It was actually four years, 1823-27. A similar error was made by John Corrill in his *Brief History* published in 1839, wherein he states that Joseph Smith first visited the hill in 1825 and obtained the plates a "year or more" later in 1827 (Corrill 1839, 12).

4. See III.L.16, BOOK OF MORMON PREFACE, 1829.

thought what ye shall eat or drink, &c Matt 6:25. This was an error in him altho[ugh] it was a permit [was permitted] by revelation as also that of going to Canada.[5] here it may be necesary to look at the way and manor in which revelation[s] are received, it was said to Oliver[6] that he should not seek for riches of this world but for wisdom (book of commandments 5—3) [D&C 6:6-7] the same was said to Hyram Smith[7] [D&C 11:7]; it was said to Joseph that in temporal labor thou shalt not have strength[,] for this is not thy calling; (B.C. 25—14) [D&C 24:9] we see that he was not to medle with temporal afairs except being steward over his own; for the church was to provide for him for food, for rament for shoes, &c. his calling was not to act in temporal labor; but we find a degression from this in the case of the Canada affair

Joseph he[a]rd that there was a chance to sell a copyright in canada for any useful book that was used in the States[.] Joseph thought this would be a good opertunity to get a handsom[e] Sum of money which was to be (after the expencis were taken out) for the exclusive benefit of the Smith famaly and was to be at the disposal of Joseph[.] accordingly Oliver Cowdery[,] Joseph Knights,[8] Hiram Page and Joseah Stoel [Josiah Stowell][9] were chosen (as I understood by revilation) to do the buisaness; we were living some 30 to 100 miles apart[.] the necesary preporation was made (by them) in a Sly manor So as to keep martin Har[r]is[10] from drawing a Share of the money, it was told me we were to go by revilation but when we assembled at father Smiths; there was no revilation for us to go but we were all anctious to get a revilation to go; and when it came we were to go to kingston where we were to Sell if they would not harden their hearts; but when we got their; there was no purcheser neither were they authorized at kingston to buy rights for the provence; but little york was the place where Such buisaness had to be done; we were to get 8,000 dollars[.] we were treated with the best of respects by all we met with in kingston—by the above we may ~~See~~ learn how a

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5. See n. 11 below.

6. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-1850), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

7. On Hyrum Smith (1800-1844), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 12.

8. On Joseph Knight, Sr. (1772-1847), see introduction to IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847.

9. On Josiah Stowell (1770-184?), see introduction to IV.B.2, MARTHA CAMPBELL TO JOSEPH SMITH, 19 DEC 1843.

10. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

revilation may be rece[i]ved and the ~~one~~ person rece[i]ving it not be benefited.[11] ...

This letter is to be continued in ano[t]h[e]r w[h]ich I think will fill 2 sheats we say [w]e think it advisable that the [b]rether[in] [-] not [-] of the sacrement till you rece[i]ve the n[e]xt letter; pleas[e] read this to all the bretharin & in peticular to brother Martin Haris he can testafy to the truth of some things here in mentioned which perhaps you may be ignorant of, you need not be disapointed if in our next there should be a mistory [mystery] revealed which [ha]s serpased anything that has ever been made known to the church in these last days. our fr[i]ends are all well the[y] would like to see bro. Wm. and bro. Martin & all of our friends in Kirtland.

In gospel ties
Hiram Page

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11. Cf. VI.A.29, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *OMAHA* (NE) *HERALD,* 10 OCT 1886; VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 30-31; VI.F.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO JOSEPH SMITH, III, JUL & SEP 1872; and VI.F.12, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO [JAMES T. COBB?], CIRCA 1881. Hiram Page may have had connections in Canada (Cook 1981, 40). His statement that the so-called "Canadian Revelation" sent them in the wrong direction, that they should have gone to Toronto, over 160 miles from Kingston, "where such buisaness had to be done," is probably inaccurate. According to Edith G. Firth, head of the Canadian History Department, Metropolitan Toronto Library Board, "there was no special office for the sale of copyrights in York (Toronto) in 1830. The first Canadian copyright act in effect in Ontario was not passed until 1841; before that time, British copyright legislation was in force. Actually, pirated editions were published on both sides of the border for many years in the absence of an international copyright agreement. Only British subjects' copyright was protected by British law. An American citizen could of course come to York and offer his copyright for sale to anyone, but it is doubtful if he would find many buyers" (Edith G. Firth to Dan Vogel, 10 June 1981). McLellin claimed to have read a copy of the revelation, apparently in the possession of Martin Harris. The date of the Canadian trip is difficult to determine, but it apparently occurred during the winter of 1829-30. Page's statement that the revelation was dictated by Joseph Smith at "father Smiths" might point to January 1830 when Smith was brought to Palmyra/Manchester to settle difficulties with Abner Cole, or perhaps February 1830 when Lucy Smith remembered a second visit from Joseph (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:113-14). David Whitmer believed the trip occurred while "the Book of Mormon was in the hands of the printer," between August 1829 and March 1830 (VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 30). John L. Traughber, who reported information from David Whitmer and William E. McLellin, said the trip occurred "early in 1830" and that "the boys went over on the ice" (VI.F.12, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO [JAMES T. COBB?], CIRCA 1881).

3.
ELIZABETH ANN WHITMER COWDERY AFFIDAVIT, 15 FEBRUARY 1870

William E. McLellin to "My Dear Friends," February 1870, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On 15 February 1870, Elizabeth Ann (Whitmer) Cowdery (1815-1892),[1] younger sister of David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery's widow, prepared an affidavit regarding the translation of the Book of Mormon. That same month, William E. McLellin[2] quoted the affidavit in a letter to friends. Unfortunately, the affidavit is lost, and McLellin's is the only known copy. In addition, the bottom half of the letter is missing beginning at the fold. Two years later, McLellin mentioned Elizabeth's affidavit again (VI.F.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO JOSEPH SMITH, III, JUL & SEP 1872). In the first letter, McLellin introduced the affidavit with the following: "Last Tuesday, I went to visit David [Whitmer] again in Richmond and found him as well as usual for him. ... I stayed in Richmond two days and nights. I had a great deal of talk with widow Cowdry and her amiable daughter. She [Elizabeth's daughter] is married to a Dr. Johnson. But has no children. She [Elizabeth] gave me a certificate and this is a copy. ..."

Richmond, Ray Co., Mo. Feb 15th 1870—I cheerfully certify that I was familiar with the manner of Joseph Smith's translating the book of Mormon. He translated the most of it at my Father's house. And I often sat by and saw and heard them translate and write for hours together. Joseph never had a curtain drawn between him and his scribe while he was translating. He would place the director in his hat, and then place ⊢⊣ his <face in his> hat, so as to exclude the light, and then [read?] to his scribe the words (he said) as they appeared before him. ...

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1. On Elizabeth Ann (Whitmer) Cowdery, see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 106.

2. On William E. McLellin (1806-1883), see introduction to III.K.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO SAMUEL MCLELLIN, 4 AUG 1832.

4.
JOHN C. WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW JENSON AND EDWARD STEVENSON, 11 OCTOBER 1888

1. Andrew Jenson, "Still Another Witness," *Historical Record* 7 (October 1888): 621.
2. Edward Stevenson, "The Thirteenth Witness to the Plates of the Book of Mormon," *Juvenile Instructor* 24 (1 January 1889): 23.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On 11 October 1888, Andrew Jenson[1] and Edward Stevenson[2] visited John C. Whitmer, son of Jacob Whitmer, and interviewed him. John related the experience of his grandmother Mary Musselman Whitmer (1778-1856),[3] wife of Peter Whitmer, Sr., who said she saw the angel with the gold plates shortly after Joseph Smith's arrival in Fayette in June 1829. In the two accounts which follow, Jenson and Stevenson separately report their interview.

[*1. Andrew Jenson Version*]

"I [John C. Whitmer] have heard my grandmother (Mary M[usselman]. Whitmer) say on several occasions that she was shown the plates of the Book of Mormon by an holy angel, whom she always called Brother Nephi. (She undoubtedly refers to Moroni, the angel who had the plates in charge.) It was at the time,[4] she said, when the translation was going on at the house of

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1. Andrew Jenson (1850-1941) was born in Torslev parish, Hjorring, Denmark. His parents were converted to Mormonism in 1854 and immigrated to Salt Lake City in 1866. He was employed by the Church Historian's Office in 1891 and sustained as Assistant Church Historian in 1898 (Jenson 1971, 1:261-63; 3:752-53).

2. On Edward Stevenson (1802-97), see introduction to I.A.9, JOSEPH SMITH RECITAL TO PONTIAC (MI) SAINTS, OCT 1834.

3. On Mary Musselman Whitmer (1778-1856), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 101.

4. June 1829.

the elder Peter Whitmer,[5] her husband. Joseph Smith and his wife[6] and Oliver Cowdery,[7] whom David Whitmer[8] a short time previous had brought up from Harmony, Pennsylvania, were all boarding with the Whitmers, and my grandmother in having so many extra persons to care for, besides her own large household, was often overloaded with work to such an extent that she felt it to be quite a burden. One evening, when (after having done her usual day's work in the house) she went to the barn to milk the cows, she met a stranger carrying something on his back that looked like a knapsack. At first she was a little afraid of him, but when he spoke to her in a kind, friendly tone, and began to explain to her the nature of the work which was going on in her house, she was filled with unexpressible joy and satisfaction. He then untied his knapsack and showed her a bundle of plates, which in size and appearance corresponded with the description subsequently given by the witness to the Book of Mormon. This strange person turned the leaves of the book of plates over, leaf after leaf, and also showed her the engravings upon them; after which he told her to be patient and faithful in bearing her burden a little longer, promising that if she would do so, she should be blessed; and her reward would be sure, if she proved faithful to the end. The personage then suddenly vanished with the plates, and where he went, she could not tell. From that moment my grandmother was enabled to perform her household duties with comparative ease, and she felt no more inclination to murmur because her lot was hard. I knew my grandmother to be a good, noble and truthful woman, and I have not the least doubt of her statement in regard to seeing the plates being strictly true. She was a strong believer in the Book of Mormon until the day of her death."

[*2. Edward Stevenson Version*]

"My grandmother told me that the strange visitor met her as she was going to milk the cows. At first she was afraid of him, but he spoke so kindly to her, explaining to her the nature of the work of translation to go on in her house, that she felt a thrill of inexpressible joy, which removed all fear from

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5. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

6. On Emma Hale Smith (1804-79), see "Introduction to Emma Smith Collection."

7. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

8. On David Whitmer (1805-88), see "Introduction to David Whitmer Collection."

her. Comforting words were spoken promising her strength and pleasure in her increased labors, and salvation at the end. Moroni took from his knapsack the plates and exhibited them as already explained by David.[9] The personage then suddenly vanished with the plates, and where he went, she could not tell. From that time my grandmother was enabled to perform her household duties with comparative ease, feeling no inclination to murmur because her lot was a hard one."

John also said: "I knew my grandmother to be a good, noble truthful woman, and I have not the least doubt of the truth of her statement in regard to seeing the plates."

9. In the same article, David Whitmer is reported as having said in 1887: "My mother went to the barn to milk the cows, where she met a mysterious personage who showed her the golden plates, turning them over leaf by leaf, with the exception of a portion of them which were fastened together with rings (the sealed part of the plates)" (p. 22).

D.
Miscellaneous Early SOURCES

1.
LUCIUS FENN TO BIRDSEYE BRONSON, 12 FEBRUARY 1830

Lucius Fenn to Birdseye Bronson, 12 February 1830, William Robertson Coe Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Lucius Fenn (or Finn), a native of Connecticut, is listed in the 1860 census of Covert, Seneca County, New York, as a seventy-seven-year-old farmer. Birdseye (or Birdsey) Bronson, son of Isaac Bronson, was born on 16 June 1801. According to the *Annals and Family Records of Winchester,* "He [Bronson] owned and occupied the house at the corner of the Norfold road and Westerbury turnpike, until his removal to New London, where both he and his wife died not far from 1840" (Boyd 1873, 111).

The present letter is important because "it is the oldest known contemporary evidence, other than newspaper notices, of the rumors that preceded the appearance of the Book of Mormon itself" (Mulder and Mortensen 1958, 27). Fenn's letter is written on a folio sheet folded lengthways to make four pages. The text appears on the first and third pages, while the second page is blank and the fourth contains the following address: "Covert NY / Feb 12 / Mr Birdseye Bronson / Winchester / Litchfield County / State of Connecticut / To be left at Samuel Hurlbuts office / Winchester Centre." It is not known if Hurlbut was the post master or simply someone with a conveniently located office in the downtown area. Fenn's letter was published by William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen in 1958 with corrections (1958, 27-29; a typed copy also appears in the Stanley S. Ivins Collection, Utah Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah).

Covert February 12 1830

Dear Sir

I have been very anxious to hear from Winchester this some time but I do not expect to unless I write first. ... it is always the case in every place there is som[e]thing to make hard feelings; we have had some trouble in this State for 2 or 3 years back[.] freemasonry has done som[e]thing or the freemasons here made a great deal of trouble and talk for som[e]<time> past and it has come to that we do not have any of them in any kind of office not even and in

some churches they have turned them out of the church[.][1] but it has at present not been the Subject as much as has been[.] they have now som[e]thing else to talk about[.] now the subject is this[:] the cold sober societys are now the conversations[.] know [now] I think myself that there is need enough of them[.] we think that it has done good and we are in hopes that it will do more for I think that it is of a very gr[e]at importence and there ought to be som[e]thing done to stop the progress of intemperance[,] for it has gone to a gr[e]at extent in this Country and we hope that we shall in some measure stop its progress[.] this will do for a while and this will be and [an] old story and then we will try som[e]thing else[.] there is som[e]thing that has taken place lately that is mysterious to us[.] it is this[:] there has been a bible found by 3 men but a short distance from us which is som[e]thing remarkable we think. there was it is said an an angel appeared to these 3 men and told them that there was a bible concealed in such a place and if one of them would go to that place he would find it[.][2] he went and found as the angel said[.] it was a stone chest[.] [p. 1] what is most to be wondered at is this that the man that found it could not read at all in the english language but he read this bible and nobody else cannot[.] it has been concealed there for fourteen hundred years[.] it is written on a kind of gold leaf[.] it is the same that ours is only there is an addition to it[.] they are a printing it in Palmyra[.] it is expected that it <will> come out soon so that we can see it[.][3] it speaks of the Millenniam day and tells when it is a going to take plais [place] and it tells that the man that is to find this bible his name as [is] Joseph and his fathers name is Joseph. some people think that it is all a speculation and some think that som[e]thing is a going to take place different from what has been[.] for my part I do not know how it will be but it is som[e]thing singular to me. as it respects religion there has been considerable of an attention paid to it this winter between these lakes and there has been considerable many as we humbly hope have been renewed by the grace of God[.] there is a general solemnity apon the people generally in these parts and we hope that there will be a gre[a]ter outpouring of the spirit than ever[.] so now you see I have given you short account of what is a doing here. ... we should like to see you all very much indeed but we do not expect to very soon for it seems to me the most like home of any place that I ever lived[,] but the land is nothing to be

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1. A search through the pages of the *Seneca Farmer,* published at Waterloo, 1829-31, attests to the prevalence of anti-Masonry in Seneca County.

2. Fenn evidently conflated the account of Joseph Smith's obtaining the plates with the subsequent visionary experience of the three witnesses.

3. The Book of Mormon was first issued from the press in late March 1830.

compared to this for this is the best that I ever saw in my life I think[.] but the people are not so respe[c]table as they are amongst you but we cannot expect to have every thing exactly right always[.] I do not know as I have any thing else to write at present only as I said before you must answer me and give our respects to all of our friends[.] these few lines are from your

friend Lucius Finn

Birdseye Bronsen

NB Direct your letter to Covert[,] seneca County[,] state of Newyork to be left at Chauncy Pratts[4] <post office> and it will certainly come

4. Chauncy Pratt, age seventy-two, is listed in the 1860 census of Covert, Seneca County, New York, as a farmer (1860:694).

2.
Diedrich Willers to Reverend Brethren, 18 June 1830

Diedrich Willers to Reverend Brethren, 18 June 1830, Willers Collection, Carl A. Kroch Library, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; translated by Neal Chandler.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Diedrich Willers, Sr. (1798-1883), was born at Walle, near Bremen, Germany. After he immigrated to America in 1819, he taught and studied for the ministry at York, Pennsylvania. In the early 1820s, Willers moved to Seneca County, New York, where he was ordained a minister in the German Reformed Church and began serving as pastor of Zion's Church in Fayette, which met in a log structure that was destroyed by fire in 1835.

The German Reformed Church was the American counterpart to the "Evangelisch Reformierte Kirche" (Evangelical Reformed Church), which exists alongside the more dominant "Evangelische Kirche" (Lutheran Church) in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. The reformed tradition traces its origin to Johannes Calvin's and Huldreich Zwingli's theological disagreements with Martin Luther and is most prominent in Holland, Switzerland, and Protestant Belgium, as well as in such areas as along the Weser River where Willers was born. Due to its greater tolerance of religious freedom than in the Lutheran/Prussian areas of Germany, this region would later prove fruitful for Mormon missionaries (see Jörg Dittberner, "One Hundred Years of Attitude: The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36 (Spring 2003): 51ff.

At least some of the Whitmer family attended Willers's church (VI.E.1, DIEDRICH WILLERS TO ELLEN E. DICKINSON, 19 JAN 1882; see also Porter 1971, 227-28). Because of his failing health, Willers resigned his pastorship in 1882 and died the following year at Fayette (Quinn 1973, 317-18).

On 18 June 1830, less than three months after the Mormon Church was organized, Willers wrote to the Reverends Lewis Mayer and Daniel Young, both professors at the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in York, Pennsylvania. Historian D. Michael Quinn described

Willers's letter as "one of the earliest descriptions of Mormonism yet discovered" (1973, 319). Quinn also gave the following physical description of the letter: "Although this document is catalogued as a letter-sermon, internal evidence indicates that it was really a first draft of a letter which Willers wrote to inform his colleagues in Pennsylvania about the dangerous new sect. Apart from two lengthy quotations from the Book of Mormon, the letter is in German. Two different handwritings are discernible in the document. Part of the letter was written by Willers himself in German script. The rest was apparently written by an American-born member of the German Reformed Church, since this handwriting is not in German script and the spelling of German words is sometimes anglicized. The scribe apparently wrote as Willers dictated portions of the letter. Presumably a final draft of the letter was mailed, leaving the rough draft among the personal papers of the Reverend" (1973, 320).

Actually, the handwriting is more complex than Quinn's description indicates. In just five pages, the handwriting changes six times, alternating among four discernible styles. While Quinn published a translation of the letter in 1973 (1973, 324-33), Neal Chandler, co-editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought,* kindly agreed to compose the current new translation for this collection. In many instances, Chandler's translation corrects and improves on the previous translation. By way of background, Chandler served an LDS mission to Germany, received a B.A. in German from the University of Utah, pursued graduate studies for two years at the University of Göttingen, and received a Ph.D. in Germanic Languages and Literature from Princeton University. He taught German language and literature for fifteen years at Lake Erie College and Case Western Reserve University and subsequently administered and taught in a creative writing program at Cleveland State University. He was a Fulbright Scholar to Germany in 1999/2000.

[Bearytown, Fayette, New York]
18 June 1830.

Reverend Brethren:

/[1]The greatest fraud of our time in the field of religion is most certainly one Joseph Smith, the professed translator of a book which carries the title, ["]The Book of Mormon, an account written by the hand of Mormon upon plates taken from the plates of Nephi ...["]

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1. The handwriting of the first scribe commences; this scribe is probably American-born since he does not use German script.

[Book of Mormon title page][2]

The publication of the aforesaid work of lies rests on a speculative venture intended to serve the interests of the publisher [Joseph Smith] and of those who are connected to him. Like a Swedenborg[3] of the past century, this man claims to keep company with spirits and angels. Because, according to the claim, the plates on which the original book is supposed to have been written were gold, it is known in this region by the title, The Golden Book. Because the work was printed here locally, I want to recount to you, according to the most credible reports:

1) The history of the origin of this book. In the month of July [1829],[4] Joseph Smith appeared in Seneca County in the neighborhood of Waterloo about six miles from where I live, and inasmuch as a certain David Whitmer[5] claimed to have seen an angel of the Lord, Smith made his way to this man's [p. 1] house in order to complete the translation of the aforesaid work in that very place, claiming that he could work only where people kept company with the inhabitants of higher worlds and that this was already the eleventh place[6] in which he had worked on his translation and where human beings had seen angels.

He [Smith] claimed that the angel of the Lord had appeared and made known to him that in the neighborhood of Palmyra, there were golden plates hidden in the earth on which was written the fate of a Jewish prophet's family, together with many as yet unfulfilled prophesies, and that the Lord had appointed him to translate the same from ancient languages into English. He claimed that a pair of spectacles had been hidden beneath the plates—without which he could not translate the plates—and that through the use of

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2. Willers quotes in English the entire title page of the Book of Mormon (see III.L.12, BOOK OF MORMON COPYRIGHT, 11 JUN 1829).

3. Emanuel Swedenborg was an eighteenth-century visionary who communed with the spirits of various planets. Quinn translated this word as "deceivers," presumably misreading "Schwedenborg" as "Schwindler." This is understandable because the word occurs at the fold in the paper and is partly obscured. Nevertheless, it is unmistakenly "Schwedenborg" when carefully scrutinized.

4. Rather, early June 1829.

5. On David Whitmer (1805-88), see "Introduction to David Whitmer Collection."

6. In regard to Fayette being the eleventh location where Smith had worked, and even if he had done some dictating elsewhere besides Harmony and Fayette, this is most certainly an exaggeration. There were eleven witnesses who said they saw the plates, and Willers may have confused this with the number of places Smith had worked on the translation.

these spectacles he (Smith) was enabled to read these languages which he had never studied and that the Holy Ghost would give him the translation in English.[7] He (Smith) had, therefore, made his way to Manchester Township, Ontario County, and found everything as described, had dug the plates and the spectacles next to them out of the earth, and now had almost completed the translation of the work.

/[8]After receiving this news, I went straightway to Whitmer's house to see in the man himself the actual source of this story, to glean more precise information, and if possible, /[9]to kill this enterprise at its inception. However, I received the response from Whitmer's father[10] that Smith had already departed to convey his translation to the printer.[11] I attempted to make the gross deception clear to this man, and he remained silent. Smith's pretension, described above, is of such a character that it does not even deserve refutation.

Since last year, all neighboring congregations have been warned earnestly and often by their teachers to beware this so-called Golden Book and not to buy one. However, the aforementioned Smith found followers to put up security with the printer to pay for his book,[12] and approximately 10,000 copies of the book have been printed,[13] which I understand are now sold at the price of $1.75 apiece. In this area more have already been sold than one

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7. Quinn believes that this statement contradicts David Whitmer, Martin Harris, and others who emphasized the "automatic operation" of the seer stone (1973, 320-21; e.g., VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 12; see also Lancaster 1990, 97-112). In fact, the earliest accounts indicate that Smith "read" the translation as it appeared in the stone (III.F.2, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEW WITH *ROCHESTER* [NY] *GEM,* CIRCA JUN 1829; III.F.1, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEWS WITH JOHN A. CLARK, 1827 & 1828; cf. 2 Nephi 27:20). However, Whitmer also stressed Smith's need to be spiritually in tune for the stone to work—although the process was admittedly more mechanistic than spiritual, the way Whitmer described it (VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 30).

8. The handwriting changes briefly to a second scribe. His misspelling of common German words suggests that he was American-born.

9. The handwriting changes to that of a third scribe who is more competent in German but whose writing, although in German script and with German abbreviations, is fairly Romanized. He is probably American-born.

10. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

11. Joseph Smith left Fayette about the end of June 1829 and evidently remained in Palmyra/Manchester until the end of the September following, returning to Harmony, Pennsylvania, in early October.

12. See III.L.14, MARTIN HARRIS MORTGAGE, 25 AUG 1829.

13. Rather, 5,000 copies were printed.

would have expected, and the heathen, godless pack[14] have now made their way to Pennsylvania to scatter their books there among the public. The author, like the apostles, has often been challenged to prove his inspiration through genuine miracles. Of course, he cannot provide such evidence. However, his followers claim that recently devils have been cast out by their preachers.[15] It is hardly surprising that such things are supposed to have happened among their own adherents. The dear Savior has already pronounced judgement on such false exorcists (Matt. 7:22-23).

Regarding 2) the content of this book (which consists of 588 pages), various thick volumes could be written against it. The style is so trivial and common that even people of limited ability can recognize that it's nothing but the seductive work of man. I have not yet read much of the book and wish to be done with this drudgery, but it is the expressed desire of my fellows, who have also secured the book in order to read it.

It is divided into various books. The first two books, called the Book of Nephi, tell about [p. 2] the family of a (so-called) prophet, Lehi—of whom the Bible tells us nothing—and his 4 sons, Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi. They are represented as being descendants of Joseph who lived during the reign of Zedekiah, King of Judah. Of Lehi it is said that he has seen God himself (John 1:18; 4:24) in heaven, which was opened up to him. This Lehi, who has been elevated from man to prophet, makes prophecies concerning John the Baptist, that he would baptize at Bethabara and was to baptize the Messiah. The author must not yet have learned that prophecies deal with things in the future and that a thing that took place over 1,800 years ago can no longer be a new prophesy this year because it deals with the past. Nephi, who has been made into a prophet, even claims, in his own time, to see Mary, the mother of the Savior, in the opened heavens, along with the child Jesus in her arms. Such false prophecies differ from the Bible in that 1) they foretell things that have already happened and 2) they have far too great a clarity, which God in his wisdom has kept from biblical prophecies so that /[16]

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14. Quinn read this as "Ratte," literally "rat" (singular), and rendered it in English as "vermin," whereas Chandler reads the word as "Rotte," a term more commonly used in the nineteenth century referring to a group of people derogatorily as a "pack," "band," "gang," "mob," "horde," or "rabble."

15. Probably a reference to when Smith was said to have cast a devil out of Newel Knight in April 1830 (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 39-41; IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 49-50; III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1829-1831, under 30 June 1830).

16. The handwriting changes to that of a fourth scribe. Obviously German-born—probably Willers himself—this scribe's handwriting is difficult to read. Words that cannot be definitively interpreted will be placed within

people neither [seek] to fulfill the prophecies and give themselves the honor for their fulfillment, which of course is due to almighty God alone, nor [expect] that the Almighty [will employ] miracles [for ends] that otherwise might be [achieved] by natural means.

Commanded by God, the prophet's family is said to have [fled] Jerusalem to [escape] the immanent destruction of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar and to live for a while in the wilderness. Soon thereafter, Nephi and his brothers travel again to Jerusalem, and [they] bring Ishmael and his family back with them to their father, Lehi. However, Ishmael, Abraham's son, must have been 1,800 years old in the time of King Zedekiah. Our Bible, which presents Methuselah as the oldest man, would certainly not have [failed to mention] such a great age. It [the Bible] says further of Ishmael (Genesis 25:17) that he lived to be 137 years old, [died], and was gathered to his people.[17] According to world history, the Arabs in the 13th century are said [to have discovered the compass needle], but according to Nephi's book, God himself gave the compass to this family in order to lead [them] across a great sea to the promised land [1 Ne. 16:10; Alma 37:38-42].

As punishment, God is said to have inflicted a black skin color upon the Lamanites, who did not want to follow Nephi and who, prior to this (as Asians), were white and fair and delightsome. The origin of Blacks, according to this view, would have been Laman, a brother of Nephi, upon whom God inflicted the black color because of his godlessness. (But just consider), there are so many reasons to trace the origin of Blacks to Ham, Noah's son.[18]

On page 65 of the Book of Mormon, human reproduction is presented as a consequence of the Fall [2 Ne. 2:22-23]; if Adam and Eve had not sinned, then—according to this tenet—they would not have had children. [Shrouded] in blindness, the author must never have read [the passage] in Genesis 1:28. He also claims that if [no] Fall had taken place, the animal creation would have been [immortal] and [animals would have] remained in their original

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brackets. Chandler explains that "this section was written in German Kurrentschrift, which was taught in German schools for a couple hundred years up until the 1920s and in which flourish, ornamentation, and improvisation were encouraged. The less readable, the more mature and distinctive the handwriting was considered to be, and Willers's script is definitely distinctive."

17. Willers assumes that the Ishmael of the Book of Mormon (ca. 589 B.C.E.) is the same Ishmael of Genesis, which is not the case.

18. The Book of Mormon's reference to a "skin of blackness" (e.g., 2 Ne. 5:21) pertains to Native rather than African Americans. Nevertheless, the Hametic hypothesis of African origins Willers alludes to was common in early America and would show up later in Joseph Smith's writings (Moses 7:8, 22; Abra. 1:21-27).

condition and, as a consequence, not propagated themselves. In order to refute this notion, [we consult] Genesis 1:22. With regard to the eternal life of animals, the Holy Bible describes human death as a consequence of the Fall; in other words, it acknowledges that had the Fall not taken place, the human body would have been destined for immortality. Nowhere does the Holy Bible trace the death of animals to the fall of man.

The 8th Chapter of the Book of Moroni mentions an epistle of his [Moroni's] father, Mormon. [—] he writes that the Holy Spirit had shown him that children were wholesome and not in need of baptism (Romans 3:12), that those who claimed infant baptism was necessary were full of bitter gall and without faith, love, and hope, and that those who believe in infant baptism [must be consigned] to hell. /[19]However, nowhere does the Holy Bible trace damnation [p. 3] to a belief in any particular baptism, but rather to unbelief (Mark 16:16). Nowhere does it claim that faith, love, and hope are the fruit of adult baptism, but it presents these rather as the fruits of the gospel and of the Spirit of God (John 20:31; Romans 10:17; Galatians 5:22). When he [Mormon] writes that infant baptism annuls the atonement of Christ, the Apostle Paul reveals him to be a false teacher in Romans 6:3 [where] he writes that all those baptized in Jesus Christ are baptized into his death.

I have read only about 100 pages in the Book of Mormon. The author, inasmuch as he represents the makers of his (never discovered) plates as prophets, wants in this way to establish his book as a canonical work. He is not satisfied with those [works] revealed to mankind through the Spirit of God, but rather introduces it (his book) as a second Bible and thereby announces that, in his opinion, the word of God is imperfect, and he threatens damnation to those who do not believe in his (false) Bible. We must answer this malediction with the Apostle Paul (Gal. 1:6-9).

3) As for the purpose of this book, it is directed to the same end [as the Bible], to show that the rejected Jewish people will be accepted again into grace and transplanted into the Church of Christ and that the heathen also are already being implanted into the true church of the Savior. However, these teachings are already in the true Bible; hence, we need no new Bible. Such superfluous revelations conflict with the wisdom of God who can do nothing which is unnecessary, who has the best intentions in all His decrees and seeks to carry these out through the best and most direct means.

4) The effects of the Book [of Mormon] already extend over the members of various Christian persuasions. Some members of the Lutheran and the Reformed, the Presbyterian, and the Baptist congregations have given this book their approval, have let themselves be immersed by them, and have

19. The handwriting changes back to that of the first scribe (see note 1).

formed themselves into their own sect. With their baptism by immersion, they are winning over many members of the Baptist Church—the general as well as the particular Baptists, from the former because of their teaching concerning the universal grace of God and from the latter because of their agreement regarding the true subject of holy baptism.

This new sect calls itself the True Followers of Christ,[20] but because they believe in the Book of Mormon, they bear the name Mormonites. For the past several Sundays and sometimes during the week, many people of both genders have been baptized by immersion so that their number in the local area may have grown to at least 100 persons.[21] They have their own preachers, of whom I know Oliver Cowdery[22] from descriptive reports and (the so-called angel seer) David Whitmer personally. However, their sect has various other preachers who are not known to me. Adherents are expected to respect the Book of Mormon, about which they all preach on Sunday, not just as a symbolic book, but rather as a second Bible and accept it as divine instruction.

The majority of the current believers were likely general Baptists previously. Nevertheless, this new sect should not send the Christian Church into shock. The past centuries have also given birth to badly deformed religious offspring, but where are they now? Where are the sects of the Nicolaites, Ebionites, Nasoreans, [p. 4] Montanites, Paulicians, among others, which are named in the history of the Christian Church? They have flowed into the ocean of the past and are marked with the stamp of oblivion. This will also be—and let us hope that it is rooted in its inception—the fate of the Mormonites. Inasmuch as various of their preachers have left for Pennsylvania to make converts with their teachings and have also taken with them a quantity of books to sell, I your brother have been commissioned by the Zion Congregation to ask you urgently to warn the inhabitants of the Union through our Evangelical Reform Magazine,[23] as broadly as it is read, against these new teachings and against the purchase of the books.

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20. See I.A.4, JOSEPH SMITH INTERVIEW WITH PETER BAUDER, OCT 1830, 36, regarding the early Book of Mormon believers "call[ing] themselves the true followers of Christ."

21. Church records indicate that as of 9 June 1830, there were only twenty-seven members—sixty-two by 26 September (VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830 & 2 JAN 1831, under 26 September 1830). Willers's estimate on 18 June must have been influenced by the number of investigators associating with the new church but not yet baptized.

22. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

23. Quinn reports on the *Magazine of the Reformed Church* that it was "an

/[24]In conclusion, I will add the testimony of these unbelieving and godless men. ...

[Testimony of the Three and Eight Witnesses][25]

[Of the witnesses,] the Whitmers are known to me. Over nine years they were adherents of the Methodists, the Reformers, the Presbyterians, Mennonites, and Baptists[26] and are, as is evident, unstable and easily excitable people, also superstitious to the highest degree so that they believe even in witches. Hiram Page[27] is equally filled with superstition, and the Smiths [who signed the document] are probably close relatives of Joseph Smith, Jr., author of the Book of Mormon.

With deep respect and love,
D. W.

Rev[s]. L. Mayer & D. Young
York [Pennsylvania]

English language publication established at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1828. In 1830 its editor was Lewis Mayer, assisted by Daniel Young. These were the men to whom the [Willers] letter was addressed. In 1832, the name of the publication was changed to *Messenger of the Reformed Church*" (Quinn 1973, 332, n. 16). Neither the *Magazine of the Reformed Church* nor the *Reformed Church Messenger* published any letters from Willers on Mormonism from 1829 to 1840 (Richard R. Berg, Philip Schaff Library, Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to Dan Vogel, 18 October 1994, personal files).

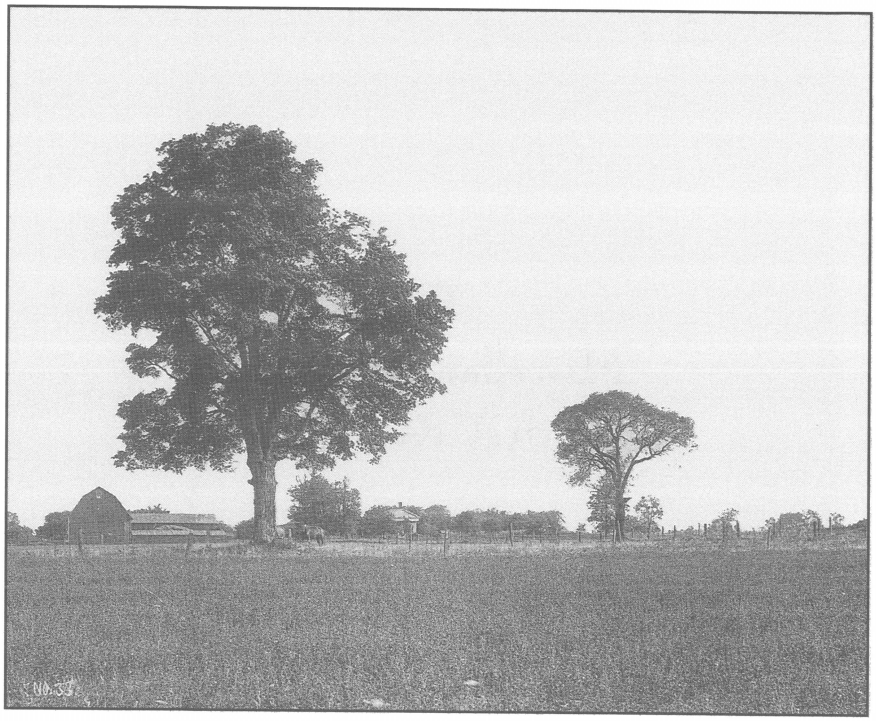
24. The handwriting changes back to that of the third scribe (see note 9).

25. Willers quotes in English the testimonies of the three and eight witnesses (see VI.G.1, TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES, JUN 1829; and III.L.13, TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES, JUN 1829).

26. Presently there is only evidence that the Whitmers attended the German Reformed Church. However, there are several references to the family's move from Pennsylvania where they were "Pennsylvania Dutch" farmers, which may corroborate the Mennonite affiliation (see VI.F.11. HISTORY OF SENECA COUNTY; also, e.g., VI.A. INTRODUCTION TO DAVID WHITMER COLLECTION, note 1; VI.A.35. DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *RICHMOND* (MO) *DEMOCRAT,* JAN 1888; VI.E.1. DIEDRICH WILLERS TO ELLEN E. DICKINSON, 19 JAN 1882; VI.E.3. DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., HISTORICAL SKETCH, 1900). The *Chicago Tribune* said Peter Whitmer, Sr., had been a strict Presbyterian (VI.A.26. DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TRIBUNE,* 15 DEC 1885).

27. On Hiram Page (1800-52), see introduction to VI.C.1, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM MCLELLIN, 30 MAY 1847.

E.
Miscellaneous Late
SOURCES



The Peter Whitmer farm site in Fayette, New York, as it looked in 1907. The buildings are of a later construction. Photo by George E. Anderson.

1.
DIEDRICH WILLERS TO ELLEN E. DICKINSON, 19 JANUARY 1882

Ellen E. Dickinson, *New Light on Mormonism* (New York: Funk & Wagnals, 1885), 249-52.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Sixteen months before his death, the Reverend Diedrich Willers[1] wrote to Ellen E. Dickinson describing early Mormon events in Seneca County, New York (see also VI.D.2, DIEDRICH WILLERS TO REVEREND BRETHREN, 18 JUN 1830). Willers sent to Dickinson the following cover letter, which she also published (p. 249):

(Varick) FAYETTE P.O.,
SENECA CO., N.Y.,
January 19, 1882.

> DEAR MADAM: Your letter of the 7th inst. came duly to hand. I enclose a few recollections and traditions of Mormonism in Seneca County. ... At my great age (eighty-four years) I can remember but little of events which transpired over fifty years ago, and as the neighborhood in which Smith conducted his operations was some eight or nine miles from my residence, I was not even at that time much conversant with the facts. There is yet living in this county (besides Mr. [Jacob] Shiley, to whom I refer), a member of the Schott family, closely related to some of that family who became apostates to Mormonism.
>
> (Signed) DIEDRICH VILLERS.

I infer that you desire information as to the early history of Mormonism in Seneca Co., N.Y., more than fifty years ago, when the present powerful Mormon organization was in its infancy, and its doctrines advocated hereabouts by Joseph Smith and other adventurers.

I will give you such data as occurs to me. As it is always right to give to every one his due, I may say that polygamy was unheard of in connection

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1. On Diedrich Willers (1798-1883), see introduction to VI.D.2, DIEDRICH WILLERS TO REVEREND BRETHREN, 18 JUN 1830.

with Mormonism in those days, and its introduction was left to a later day—by Latter-Day Saints. [p. 249]

When I came to Seneca County as pastor of a number of congregations of the (German) Reformed Church, in April, 1821, I found among the members of a remote congregation, Zion's Church (afterward known as Jerusalem Church), in West Fayette, a plain, unassuming farmer of the name Peter Whitmer,[2] a native of Pennsylvania, of the class of settlers known as Pennsylvania Germans. He was a quiet, unpretending, and apparently honest, candid, and simple-minded man. On the fifth day of April, 1822, at my first confirmation services of a class after instruction in the Heidelberg Catechism, I find among the names of the thirty-eight young persons then confirmed by me those of John Whitmer, Christian Whitmer, and Jacob Whitmer.[3] My recollection is, that I baptized one or more of the Whitmer family as adults, according to the custom of the Reformed Church.[4]

I may state here, that I never met or had any acquaintance with Joseph Smith, Hiram Page,[5] [Oliver] Cowdrey,[6] or Sidney Rigdon,[7] nor, in fact, with any of the persons connected with them, except the Whitmers and the Jolly family. I am informed by Mr. Jacob Shiley,[8] an old gentleman, aged seventy-nine years, now a resident of Fayette (who fifty or more years ago occupied a farm adjoining the residence of the Whitmers and Jollys), that the five persons of the name Whitmer, whose names appear in the "Testimony of three witnesses" and the "Testimony of eight witnesses," appearing at the end of the Mormon Bible, to wit: the three above-named, Christian,[9]

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2. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

3. "Record of German Reformed Church at Bearytown, Seneca, New York," 5 April 1822, Waterloo Library and Historical Society, Waterloo, New York. This document is reproduced in Porter 1971, 228.

4. Ibid., 7 April 1822, indicates that Peter and Christian Whitmer received the Holy Sacrament of the Reformed Church (Porter 1971, 229).

5. On Hiram Page (1800-52), see introduction to VI.C.1, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM MCLELLIN, 30 MAY 1847.

6. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

7. On Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), see introduction to I.A.13, SIDNEY RIGDON ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1836.

8. Jacob Shiley, son of George Shiley, is listed in the 1830 census of Fayette, New York, in close proximity to Peter, Jacob, and Christian Whitmer. In 1830, he was between twenty and thirty years of age (see U.S. Census, Fayette, Seneca County, New York, 1830).

9. On Christian Whitmer (1798-1835), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 96.

John,[10] and Jacob Whitmer,[11] and Peter Whitmer, Jr.,[12] and David Whitmer[13] were all sons of Peter Whitmer, Sr.

Hiram Page, who is described to me as an itinerant botanic or root doctor, married a daughter of Peter Whitmer.[14] It was said at the time of the marriage of Page to Miss Whitmer, that her father was opposed to the marriage until convinced by Page that Miss Whitmer was consumptive, and that he (Page), by the extraction of a certain tooth, the location of which he alone knew, could effect a cure. As there was doubtless a previous understanding between Page and the young lady, the pretended cure was reputed to have been effected through Page's agency, and the marriage took place.

One of the sons of Mr. Whitmer (as I am informed by Mr. Shiley) married a Miss Jolly, whose mother, the wife of William Jolly, of West Fayette, was a baptized convert to Mormonism, and with her husband removed with the Mormons to Ohio.[15] Mr. Jolly, however (as Mr. Shiley informs me), declined to contribute the proceeds of the sale of his property to the common stock of Mormonism, and eventually withdrew from them, and died in Ohio, near Cleveland.[16] [p. 250] Two other sons of Mr. Whitmer (as Mr. Shiley informs me) married ladies of the name Schott, of West Fayette, near Waterloo, one of whom is said to have returned to Seneca County upon the death of her husband.[17]

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10. On John Whitmer (1802-78), see "Introduction to John Whitmer Collection."

11. On Jacob Whitmer (1800-56), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 98.

12. On Peter Whitmer, Jr. (1809-36), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 63.

13. On David Whitmer (1805-88), see "Introduction to David Whitmer Collection."

14. On Catherine Whitmer Page (1807-?), whom Hiram Page married on 10 November 1825, see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 95.

15. On William Jolly (1777-1863), husband of Elizabeth Jolly, see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 102. On Elizabeth Jolly (1788-1843), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 103. William and Elizabeth were baptized on 18 April 1830 (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 39), and David Whitmer (1805-88) married their daughter, Julia Ann Jolly (1815-89), on 9 January 1831 (Cook 1981, 24).

16. Dean Jessee reports that William Jolly "apparently did not remain with the Church," and that he died at Parkman, Geauga County, Ohio (Jessee 1989, 494).

17. Christian Whitmer (1798-1835) married Anne Schott (1801-66) in 1825 (Jessee 1989, 520). After Christian's death, Anne married Francis Hulett,

My informant (Mr. Shiley) says that he has attended the services held at the houses of Peter Whitmer and William Jolly, and heard, among others who spoke (or preached), Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hiram Page. The baptisms were performed by immersion in Thomas' Creek and Kendig Creek,[18] in the town of Fayette. Mr. Jacob Shiley and his brother George Shiley,[19] also still living in West Fayette, were present, and witnessed the immersion in baptism of Mrs. William Jolly. When it became known to me that Peter Whitmer and his family were becoming the dupes of Smith and his co-workers, I called upon Mr. Whitmer, in order to remonstrate with him and to warn him of the errors and delusions and the false doctrines promulgated by these men. My conversation, however, apparently made no impression upon him, his only reply to my arguments being the repeated quotation in the German language of the words: "Jesus Christ, yesterday, to-day, and forever."

As an illustration, to show how easily the Whitmers were duped, it is related, that by some contrivance of Smith and his associates a wooden image or representation was placed in a tree in a field where one of Whitmer's sons was engaged in ploughing, and that when interrogated as to whether he had not seen an angel, he answered in the affirmative. "Then," said Smith, "this is the place where the 'Book of Mormon' must be completed, since the angel has already appeared eleven times, and it has been revealed to me that at the place of the twelfth appearing of the angel, the book must be completed." Hence Whitmers', in West Fayette, became the resort of Smith and his fellow-impostors during the progress of this work.

As for a time a number of persons besides the Whitmers were inclined to favor the Mormons, I preached a sermon in Zion's (Jerusalem) Church on June 13th, 1830, from the text, Galatians 1:8.[20] So far as I know, no other

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whom she later divorced. Soon after, she returned to Fayette, New York, where she later died (Jessee 1989, 521). Jacob Whitmer (1800-56) married Elizabeth Ann Schott (1803-?) in 1825 (Jessee 1989, 521).

18. According to Willers's son, Mormon converts were "from time to time baptized by immersion in Seneca lake, Seneca river, Thomas and Kendig creeks, and other streams not far from the Whitmer farm" (VI.E.3, DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., HISTORICAL SKETCH, 1900, 48). Joseph Smith's history only mentions Seneca Lake.

19. George Shiley, Jr., is listed in the 1830 census of Fayette as a young man in his twenties.

20. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8, KJV).

persons in that vicinity except the Whitmers, the Jolly family, and several members of the Schott family became adherents.

A history of Seneca Co., N.Y., published in 1876 by Everts, Ensign & Everts, Philadelphia, Penn., contains some reference to Mormonism, from the recollection of Hon. Daniel S. Kendig,[21] still living at Waterloo, who was born in Fayette in 1802, and lived there in the early years of his life. French's *New York Gazetteer,* published by R. Pearsall Smith, at Syracuse, New York, in 1860, also [p. 251] contained some data concerning Mormonism, and states that the first Mormon society was formed in the town of Fayette, Seneca County, in 1830.[22] In this gazetteer Martin Harris[23] is reported to have mortgaged his farm to defray the expense of printing the Mormon Bible. It was generally reported hereabouts, however, that Peter Whitmer had become surety for paying the cost of printing this Bible, and it may be difficult now to ascertain the exact facts in regard thereto; but as Smith was engaged in preparing the Bible for publication at Whitmer's house, it is probable that Whitmer also became involved in the expense of publication.[24]

It is conceded, I think, that when Mr. Whitmer disposed of his property in this county he contributed what remained to the Mormon fund, and followed the fortunes of Mormonism. The edition printed of the "Book of Mormon" was, I am told, three thousand copies.

I have a copy of the "Book of Mormon," by "Joseph Smith, Jr., Author and Proprietor," bearing the imprint, "Palmyra. Printed by E. B. Grandin[25] for the Author, 1830." This is doubtless one of the original copies.

The price of the Mormon Bible when issued was said to have been fixed in the first instance at $1.50 or $1.75 per copy; as the sale at that price

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21. See VI.F.11, *HISTORY OF SENECA COUNTY (NY),* 1876.

22. J[ohn]. H[omer]. French, *Gazetteer of the State of New York* ([Syracuse, New York]: [R. P. Smith], 1860), has two brief references to Mormonism: "Joseph Smith, the father of the prophet, settled a little s[outh]. of Palmyra Village in 1819. The plates of the Mormon bible were said to have been dug up on a hillside in Manchester, Ontario co., a little s[outh]. of the Palmyra line. The Smiths were money diggers, and had previously been digging in this locality for gold. The book was printed at the office of the Wayne Sentinel, Martin Harris, a convert, mortgaging his farm to defray the expense" (p. 693).

23. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

24. Martin Harris alone bore the financial burden of publishing the Book of Mormon by mortgaging his farm (see III.L.14, MARTIN HARRIS MORTGAGE, 25 AUG 1829).

25. On Egbert B. Grandin (1806-45), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 77.

was very slow, the price was reduced from time to time by Smith, under instructions from "the angel of the Lord," until at last copies were offered, I have been told, as low as fifty cents per copy, and even as low as twenty-five cents each.

There is yet living at Palmyra, N.Y., an octogenarian, Mr. J. H. Gilbert,[26] who set type upon the original edition of the Mormon Bible. ...

26. On John H. Gilbert (1802-95), see "Introduction to John H. Gilbert Collection."

2.
LEE YOST TO DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., 18 MAY 1897

Lee Yost to Diedrich Willers, Jr., 18 May 1897, Willers Papers, Seneca Falls Historical Society, Seneca Falls, New York.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On 18 May 1897, Lee Yost (ca. 1829-?), a Michigan merchant and former resident of Fayette, New York, responded to a request from Diedrich Willers, Jr.,[1] who was preparing his *Centennial Historical Sketch of the Town of Fayette* (see VI.E.3, DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., HISTORICAL SKETCH, 1900), and related his knowledge of Mormon activities in the Fayette area.

Hudson[,] Michigan[.] May 18[,] 1897

Friend Willers[:] after a long time I will now try and write you a short History of Joseph Smith the Mormon Phroffet [prophet] as he was called here at the time of getting up of the Mormon Bible[.] Joe Smith's Parents lived at or near Palmyra[,] Wayne Count[y][,] N[ew]. York State[.] The first heard of Joe Smith was his coming to Fayette to Examine and Search for Treasure as he Supposed was hid or Burried in or about the Embankments of the old Fort or Earth Works[2] was and Plainly to be Seen in the woods on the Farm of my Wife's Grand=father—John Markel[3] in Fayette[.] Smith was shown the Place or Fort by my Wifes Father William A Marshall[,] Son in Law to Markel[.] There together with one or two others they Spent Several

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1. On Diedrich Willers, Jr. (1820-1908), see introduction to VI.E.3, DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., HISTORICAL SKETCH, 1900.

2. An ancient fortification near Ovid, Seneca County, New York, was examined by DeWitt Clinton in 1811 (*History of Seneca Co., New York,* 1876, 99). On Joseph Smith's possible early contact with Fayette, see VI.F.11, HISTORY OF SENECA COUNTY (NY), 1876; AND VI.E.4, HARRISON CHAMBERLAIN REMINISCENCE, 1903. See also Quinn 1998, 51-52.

3. John Markel is difficult to find. Nevertheless, John A. Rumsey mentioned him in 1886 as living south of Waterloo, "Next farm North Markels all dead, you may remember John and Jake Markel" (John A. Rumsey to David Whitmer, 1 January 1886, Seneca Falls Historical Society, Seneca Falls, New York, cited in Porter 1971, 243).

days and nights[,] Smith with his mineral Rod to find the Hidden location But failed to find the treasure [p. 1]

the next heard of Smith was his Story of finding the Golden Bible[.] the History he gave of the finding was that the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and directed him to Search in a certain Spot East of the vil[l]age of Palmyra directing him of a certain Place South Side of the Road in the field at the foot of of a hill or quite a rise of ground [where] he would find the Plates of the Golden Bible[.] I stayed all night at a tavern on the North side of this road and was shown the very Spot Smith Said he[,] the angel[,] directed him where to find the the Plates of the Golden Bible[.] the Next we hear of Joe Smith was his coming into the Town of Fayette and Enlisting the Family of the Whitmores in the getting up of the Mormon Bible[.] it was at the House of old Mr Whitmore[4] that Smith Translated or pretended to[.] he had one Corner of a room in the House Partitioned off in which he would translate from the Golden Plates [p. 2] and a man by the name of Oliver Cowdry[5] would in the other room write as Smith read to him[.] this was the Start of the Mormon Bible[.] My Father Casper Yost[6] at [that] time[,] a number of times[,] went over to the Whitmores and there Saw and handled the Golden Plates so called[.] the plates looked to him[,] he Said and I have heard him describe them to others as they appeared to him[,] as sheets or plates of Brass with letters or Engraving which he did not understand or know anything about[.][7] Finally the Mormon Bible was Published[.] it was a jumbled up mess taken from part of the Bible and parts of Something else[.] John Whitmore[,][8] Sidney Rigden[9] and Several others [who] became Mormon Preachers used to hold meetings at the Whitmore house and in different School houses[.] Da-

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4. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

5. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

6. Casper Yost is listed in the 1860 census of Fayette, Seneca County, New York, as a forty-three-year-old farmer (1860:454). He also built and ran a saw mill (see Lee Yost to Diedrich Willers, Jr., 11 May 1897, Seneca Falls Historical Society, Seneca Falls, New York).

7. Perhaps Yost's description was based on what he had heard from the Smiths or Whitmers and his son misconstrued it as a personal experience.

8. On John Whitmer (1802-78), see "Introduction to John Whitmer Collection."

9. On Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), see introduction to I.A.13, SIDNEY RIGDON ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1836.

vid[,][10] Peter[11] and John[,] sons of the old gentleman Whitmore[,] became quite engaged in the getting up the Society of the Mormons[.] [p. 3]

the First Principles of the doctrine of the Mormons was to believe in the Mormon Bible as inspired writing and as Joseph Smith as the Mormon Divine Phroffet [prophet][.] the one Doctrine of the Society was that those wishing to become members must give to the church all their Earthly Possession put in as common Stock. there is where old Mr. Whitmore made his mistake Sold his Farm ang [and] gave the Proceed to the Mormons and became a Poor Man afar as proper[t]y was concerned[.][12] quite a number of men pretty well off refused to give their Property to the mormons So did ~~mot~~ <not> become members[.] I recollect Several[.] Oran Chamberlain[13] owning property between Waterloo and Seneca Falls was one[.] Philip Burrows[14] having a nice Farm in what was called the Burgh[.][15] I will give you a Short Sketch of what I thought of the getting up of the Mormon Bible[.] at the First this Same Oliver Cowdry taught School in our district before Joe Smith ~~pretended to~~ [said] he found the golden Plates as directed by the angel of the Lord[.][16] it was the winter School he taught [p. 4] and Cowdry was in the hablot [habit] of Staying in the School House late nights writin[g] about Something no one knew what[.] Finally Several of the older Boys made up their Minds to See what the teacher was writing about[.] Several of [them]

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10. On David Whitmer (1805-88), see "Introduction to David Whitmer Collection."

11. On Peter Whitmer, Jr. (1809-36), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 63.

12. A warranty deed, dated 1 April 1831, indicates that Peter and Mary Whitmer conveyed to Charles Stuart their hundred-acre lot in Fayette for $2,200 (Deeds, Liber W, 318, Seneca Falls County Courthouse, Waterloo, New York, cited in Porter 1971, 312).

13. Orrin Chamberlain was in his fifties when the 1840 census was taken in Fayette, Seneca County, New York (1840:223). The *Rochester Union Advertiser* for 23 January 1875 states that Smith's "first material convert was a man by the name of Chamberlin, who lived near a place called the Kingdom, between Seneca Falls and Waterloo. This man owned a good farm, and through his aid and others the Mormon bible was first published."

14. Philip Burrows (Burroughs) is listed in the 1830 census of Seneca Falls, Seneca County, New York, as being in his thirties (1830:23).

15. See III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1828-1831, under 9 March 1831, 116.

16. This is the only source claiming that Cowdery taught school in Seneca County. If true, it probably happened during the winter of 1829-30 while the Book of Mormon was being printed rather than before 1827 as claimed.

got in to the School House[.] I remember who they were[.] their names were Sylvester Stringham,[17] Henry Gamber[18] and Brother Chester Yost[.][19] they got Hold of the writings and took them away[.] Now my idea of this is that in the First Cowdry had a goo[d] deal to [do] with the writing of the Mormon Bible and in the Mormon Bible[,] its there[,] is this Statement[:] in translating from the golden Plates that Some designing person or persons had Stolen part of the History and the angel of the Lord appeared to Joe Smith and directed him to Seal up that Part that was stolen and not translate it[.][20] my idea was and is yet that the writings were a part of Smiths mormon Bible [p. 5] and I once got Hold of an old Book called the Tales of a Grandfather[,] it goes on to give the History of the Building of the Tower [of] Bable[21] and the confusion of the Languages and goes on to describe the dispersion of the People[.] they Seperated into Small Groups and in doing So each Band would [have] its leaders[.] they would give their leader a [name][.] the Names were Such as the Hittites[,] the Levites[,] the Moabites[,] the Nevites and the Amalekites and and we found in the Book of Mormon these very Names at the begining of different chap[t]ers in the Mormon Book[.][22] Well Jos[eph] and his church was nothing but a Sort of Laughing Stock[.] there Sayings and doing[s] were So rediculous the People [be]came Disgusted withe them[.] they finally in a body left and settled in Ohio I forgot the Name of the Place[.] there there [their] doctrine and doing[s] was such the People drove them away[.] the

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17. Sylvester Stringham, age fifty, is listed in the 1860 census of Fayette, Seneca County, New York, as a farmer (1860:454).

18. While Federal Census records list many Gambers in Seneca County (1830, 1850), this person remains unidentified.

19. Chester Yost (ca. 1803-74), a farmer and justice of the peace, was born in Fayette. In Ypsilanti, Michigan, he would become partner with Benjamin Follett in a mercantile business and a Republican state senator in 1859 (Yost Family File, Willers Papers, Seneca Falls Historical Society, Seneca Falls, New York; U.S. Census, Ypsilanti, Washenaw County, Michigan, 1860:857).

20. See III.L.16, BOOK OF MORMON PREFACE, 1829.

21. Yost is probably referring to Sir Walter Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather: Being Stories Taken from Scottish History* (2 vols.), with several American editions in 1828 (Boston, New York, and Philadelphia). However, it has nothing to do with the Tower of Babel.

22. This statement, especially as it pertains to the contents of the Book of Mormon, is inaccurate. Although there are Amalekites and possibly Nevites (=Nephites) in the Book of Mormon, there are no Hittites, Levites, or Moabites, nor are such names "found ... at the begin[n]ing of different chap[t]ers in the Mormon Book." In addition, Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather* (ibid.) has nothing about "Nevites." Except for "Nevites," the names Yost cites are from the Old Testament.

next move was to Illanois Settling at Navoo[.] Here for the first[,] if I remember[,] the plurogh [plurality] [p. 6] of Wive[s] was first Preached and it was here they becam[e] So bad and obncious [obnoxious] the People rose up in arms against [them] and it was her[e] that Joe Smith appearing at one of the windows[,] the People in [a] rage and frenzy Shot Joe Smith[.] from there[,] Electing Brigam Young[23] as their leader[,] they Emigrated to Salt Lake City[,] Uta[h]

I have Written you a long lot of Stuff that I think if you can read it you will be glad when you get through

Yours Respectfully
Lee Yost

23. On Brigham Young (1801-77), see introduction to III.K.19, BRIGHAM YOUNG ACCOUNTS, 1855 & 1857.

3.
DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., HISTORICAL SKETCH, 1900

Diedrich Willers, Jr., *Centennial Historical Sketch of the Town of Fayette, Seneca County, New-York, 1800-1900* (Geneva, New York: W. F. Humphrey, 1900), 47-48, 51.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Diedrich Willers, Jr. (1820-1908), whose father was the minister of the German Reformed Church where the Whitmers attended church, published a history of Fayette, New York, which included an account of Mormon activities in the area. Willers's correspondence at the Seneca Falls Historical Society indicates that much of his information about Mormonism came from Apostle Franklin D. Richards (1821-99) of Salt Lake City.

... The Mormon church which has arisen to prominence at the present time, was first organized at the house of Peter Whitmer,[1] a Pennsylvania German farmer (residing upon a farm in the southeast corner of Military Lot No. 13, in Fayette), April 6, 1830.

The founder of this church was Joseph Smith, born at Sharon, Vermont, Dec. 23, 1805, who in 1815[2] removed to Western New York with his parents. In after years, he made it known, that as early as Sept. 22, 1823, he had discovered certain plates, known as the "Golden plates," buried in a hill, in the Town of Manchester, Ontario County, N.Y., about four miles south of Palmyra, which plates however he did not remove from their place of deposit, until four years afterwards. These plates contained inscriptions in unknown characters or letters, which soon after he had exhumed them, in Sept.

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1. The location of the church's organization came from correspondence with Franklin D. Richards (see Diedrich Willers to Daniel Hendrix, 27 July 1895, Seneca Falls Historical Society, Seneca Falls, New York). However, see discussion in I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 82. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

2. Joseph Smith, Sr., probably arrived at Palmyra in the fall of 1816, and Lucy and the children followed sometime in the winter of 1816-17.

1827, he began (while living at the home of his wife,[3] in Harmony, Penn.) to translate and transcribe into English, with the aid, as he alleged, of certain mysterious Seer Stones, which he called Urim and Thummim.

In June 1829, Joseph Smith removed from Pennsylvania to the residence of Peter Whitmer, where the work of translation progressed, assisted by Oliver Cowdery[4] and David[5] and John Whitmer[6] (sons of Peter), and the "Book of Mormon," called also the "Mormon Bible," first printed by Egbert B. Grandin[7] at Palmyra, N.Y., was issued in the year 1830.

The organization of April 6, 1830, alluded to, was perfected by Joseph Smith (then known as "the Prophet") and five others, to wit: Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Hyrum Smith and Samuel H. Smith.[8]

As early as June 1829, David Whitmer and Hyrum Smith[9] were baptized by Joseph Smith by immersion, in Seneca lake, and one (John Whitmer), was baptized there by Oliver Cowdery.[10] [p. 47]

The first public meeting after the organization referred to, was held at the house of Peter Whitmer, April 11, 1830, at which Oliver Cowdery preached. On the same day Hiram Page, Catharine Page, Christian Whitmer, Anna Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer and Elizabeth Whitmer were baptized,[11] and on April 18, of the same year, Peter Whitmer, Sr., Mary Whitmer, William Jolly, Elizabeth Jolly, Vincent Jolly and Elizabeth Ann Whitmer were baptized.[12]

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3. On Emma Hale Smith (1804-79), see "Introduction to Emma Smith Collection."

4. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

5. On David Whitmer (1805-88), see "Introduction to David Whitmer Collection."

6. On John Whitmer (1802-78), see "Introduction to John Whitmer Collection."

7. On Egbert B. Grandin (1806-45), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 77.

8. Regarding the founding members of the church, see introduction to IV.A.4, JOSEPH KNIGHT, JR., STATEMENT 11 AUG 1862.

9. On Hyrum Smith (1800-44), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 12.

10. This follows I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 23, except that Oliver Cowdery baptizes Peter Whitmer, Jr., rather than John Whitmer.

11. This follows I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 39, minus Mary Page.

12. This follows I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 39, minus Ziba Peterson.

In June, 1830, nine converts in addition to those named, were baptized in Fayette, and a number of others were from time to time baptized by immersion in Seneca lake, Seneca river,[13] Thomas and Kendig creeks,[14] and other streams not far from the Whitmer farm.

Preaching services were held in 1830 and 1831 at Peter Whitmer's house, and at Whitmer's school house, in District No. 17, Fayette (northeast from Whitmer's near Martin Miller's, and the junction of Military Lots 3, 4, and 13). This school district was annulled in 1841, hand [and] t[h]e school house has since been removed.[15]

Another preaching point was at the school house in school district No. 15 (now No. 7), in the locality known as "The Beach," in northeast Fayette.[16]

The first Conference of the Mormon church was held in Fayette, June 1, 1830, at which thirty members were present.[17]

The second General Conference held in Fayette, Sept. 1, 1830,[18] continued for three days, and a third Conference was held in this town, Jan. 2, 1831.[19]

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13. Another account claims that baptisms were performed "in Seneca Lake near the Outlet" (Stanley I. Reynolds, Notebook, under "Watkins," Waterloo Historical Society, Waterloo, New York, cited in Porter 1971, 256). The Seneca River runs from Seneca Lake eastward through the village of Waterloo.

14. According to another source, "the first baptism in the Mormon faith was made in this town [Fayette], by immersion in a small brook, called Thomas Creek" (IV.F.11, *HISTORY OF SENECA COUNTY* [NY], 1876). Larry C. Porter reports that "the upper branch of Thomas Creek, where local tradition has it that some early baptisms were performed, is just one field west of the Peter Whitmer, Sr., farm. ... Kindig Creek lies to the west of Thomas Creek, running somewhat parallel to it, and emptying into the Seneca River, as does Thomas Creek" (Porter 1971, 256-57, 257-58).

15. The Moravian church is now located on the lot.

16. Willers does not identify his source for this information, and it is not corroborated elsewhere.

17. Follows I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 41, including the incorrect date of 1 June 1830 (should be 9 June). Willers obtained this information from Franklin D. Richards (see Diedrich Willers to Daniel Hendrix, 27 July 1895, Seneca Falls Historical Society, Seneca Falls, New York).

18. Follows I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 54-58, including the incorrect date 1 September 1830 (actually 26-28 September). Willers obtained this information from Franklin D. Richards (see n. 17).

19. See VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830, & 2 JAN 1831; and I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 88-90.

Joseph Smith removed his family from Harmony, Pa., to Peter Whitmer's, the last week in August, 1830.

Sidney Rigdon[20] and Orson Pratt[21] (who, with Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer were prominent in the early development of the Mormon church), came to Fayette late in the year 1830.

In the latter part of January, 1831, Joseph Smith and wife, Sidney Rigdon and others, removed to Kirtland, Ohio. The Whitmer and Jolly families accompanied, or soon after followed there. ... [p. 48] ...

Oliver Cowdery, a school teacher, came to Fayette and taught a district school in the Yost district before 1830,[22] and he with David Whitmer and Martin Harris,[23] constituted the three witnesses certifying to the Book of Mormon. (Mr. Lee Yost, now of Lenawee County, Michigan, aged eighty five years, attended this term of school.) ... [p. 51]

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20. On Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), see introduction to I.A.13, SIDNEY RIGDON ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1836.

21. On Orson Pratt (1811-81), see introduction to I.A.16, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1839.

22. See VI.E.2, LEE YOST TO DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., 18 MAY 1897, where it is claimed that "Oliver Cowdry taught School in our district before Joe Smith ... found the golden Plates," which is doubtful.

23. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

4.
HARRISON CHAMBERLAIN REMINISCENCE, 1903

Harrison Chamberlain, "The Kingdom," *Papers Read before the Seneca Falls Historical Society* (Seneca Falls, New York: Seneca Falls Historical Society, 1903), 20-21.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Harrison Chamberlain (ca. 1832-?), son of Jacob P. Chamberlain, settled in Seneca Falls with his parents in 1837. In 1870, he became one of the proprietors of the National Yeast Company (*History of Seneca Co.*, 1876, 110, 167; U.S. Census, Seneca Falls, Seneca County, New York, 1860:15). The following reminiscence purports to give details of Joseph Smith's activities in "The Kingdom," a small community midway between Waterloo and Seneca Falls. The name comes from "the devil's kingdom" because of its "reputation for gangsters, gamesters, adventurers and fighters who made their headquarters at a tavern operated by Pontius Hooper" (unidentified newspaper clipping, cited in Porter 1971, 270). When Lucy Smith and her family moved from Manchester to "Waterloo," they apparently located at the Kingdom (Porter 1971, 269). According to one source, "Judge [Gary V.] Sackett was also acquainted with Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon Church, when he was at the Kingdom and Kendig Creek making converts. Though impressed with the earnestness of this new prophet he regarded him as self-deceived by his fanciful notions and dreams" (Sackett 1905, 70).

... Another incident may well be mentioned because of its connection of the place with a religious ism that has developed into vast proportions. Just east of the tavern and adjoining the Reamer blacksmith shop, there stood in the fifties a small story and a half house. I remember it very well, and can recall the fact that the neighbors spoke of it as the house where Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, lived for a while in the fall of 1823.[1] Their im-

1. While the year is incorrect, Lucy Smith and her family may have lived in this house. Larry C. Porter reports: "On September 10, 1959, Stanley I. Reynolds, a Waterloo genealogist, told Sister Wilford A. Hall, an LDS missionary at the Peter Whitmer Farm, the location, according to his research, of that house. He directed her to a home which, at that time, was standing on the north

pressions of him were not on the whole very flattering. He had been in the habit of coming over from Palmyra, making his living by pretending that he could detect hidden springs of water.[2] He was a peculiar, odd looking man, dressed in the plainest homespun, and rather an object of wit and pleasantry. It was not till late in the fall of 1823 that he aroused particular interest in himself. Then he claimed that he had a singular and mysterious mission. At the start, only to a few of his most intimate friends did he [p. 20] disclose the nature of it. However it soon was noised about that Smith had received some spiritual revelation, and the place was wild to learn more about it. Under apparently a simple and innocent manner, Smith must have been a keen judge of human nature, understanding well how to excite curiosity and make converts. With great confidence he told how he had had a vision, how in that vision an angel had pointed out to him a hill where golden plates were buried, upon which were engraved the law of the "Latter Day Saints;" how he had gone there and found these wonderful plates, becoming the possessor of the latest revelation of God. Several believed and by their influence and money gave the prophet great assistance. A church was organized and the baptism of the first saints took place near by, at Silver Creek.[3] And in June 1830, the first Mormon conference was held in the adjoining town of Fayette.[4] ...

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side of State Highway 5, north of the Seneca River, in the Kingdom. The next day, September 11, 1959, Sister Hall, in the company of Mrs. Edna Kime, visited the designated house and there met a Miss Duntz, an elderly lady who affirmed the tradition of the house being that of the Smiths. Today, the purported Smith home is no longer standing, having been torn down to make way for a business district" (Porter 1971, 270-71).

2. On Joseph Smith's possible early contact with Fayette, see VI.F.11, HISTORY OF SENECA COUNTY (NY), 1876; AND VI.E.2, LEE YOST TO DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., 18 MAY 1897. See also Quinn 1998, 51-52.

3. Another source claims that Joseph Smith "located at Kingdom, a mile west of Seneca Falls, about 1821 or '22 as a general hand for any kind of work. ... His earliest 'baptisms'—by immersion—were at Silver Creek, south of Kingdom" (VI.E.5, ERNEST L. WELCH ACCOUNT, 1904).

4. See VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830 & 2 JAN 1831.

5.
ERNEST L. WELCH ACCOUNT, 1904

[Ernest L. Welch] (1855-?), *"Grip's" Historical Souvenir of Seneca Falls* (Syracuse, New York: [Ernest L. Welch], 1904), 26.

"Mormon Joe," as he was called—Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, first made known his "divine discovery," the "golden plates," which none hereabouts ever saw, to some of the prominent residents of Junius. He located at Kingdom, a mile west of Seneca Falls, about 1821 or '22 as a general hand for any kind of work[1]; but engaged chiefly in finding water with a switch carried in the hand, a custom in those days.[2] He came here from Pompey [Palmyra?] and lived chiefly by his wits. From this place he went over into the town of Fayette, about 1830, where in April of that year he organized the first Mormon church and baptized the first converts. Mr. Harrison Chamberlain well remembers much told about his personality by his father and grandfather.[3]

Strangely he procured financial assistance from wealthy men living hereabouts to whom he in confidence first made known his "divine inspirations." Some of these men sacrificed a good deal to furnish him funds. He had with him an assistant or secretary, Oliver Cowdery,[4] who transcribed what Mormon Joe, standing behind a curtain, professed to read from the golden plates, the "inspired Word of God," as Smith said.

He was a peculiar, odd looking man, dressed in the plainest homespun, and rather an object of wit and pleasantry. It was not until the fall of 1823 that

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1. Joseph Smith's presence in Seneca County as early as 1821 or 1822 is doubtful (cf. VI.E.4, HARRISON CHAMBERLAIN REMINISCENCE, 1903).

2. Diedrich Willers, Jr., wrote to Daniel Hendrix on 27 July 1895: "I have heard of him as a day laborer in this Country for a couple of years prior to 1830, when he used to used a rod of some kind in pretending to hunt <locate> water for farmers[,] wells, or minerals" (Willers Papers, Seneca Falls Historical Society, Seneca Falls, New York).

3. This paragraph was taken from VI.E.4, HARRISON CHAMBERLAIN REMINISCENCE, 1903, 20-21.

4. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

he aroused particular interest in himself. Then he claimed that he had a singular and mysterious mission. It soon was noised about that Smith had received some spiritual revelation, and the place was wild to learn more about it. Under apparently a simple and innocent manner, Smith must have been a keen judge of human nature, understanding well how to excite curiosity and make converts.[5]

His earliest "baptisms"—by immersion—were at Silver Creek, south of Kingdom.[6] He then resided in the house of Peter Whitmer,[7] three miles south of Waterloo, where he gathered his few followers about him and preached to them. ...[8]

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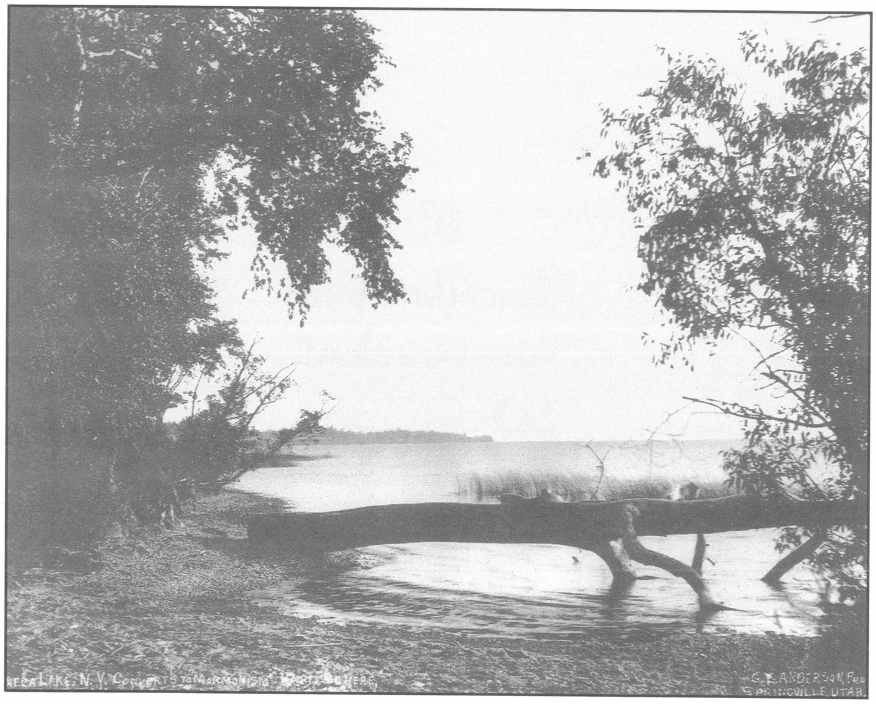
5. This paragraph was borrowed from VI.E.4, HARRISON CHAMBERLAIN REMINISCENCE, 1903, 20-21.

6. Cf. VI.E.4, HARRISON CHAMBERLAIN REMINISCENCE, 1903, 21.

7. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

8. In addition to the above excerpt about Joseph Smith, Welch included the statement of Grattis (also spelled Gratius or Gradis) C. DeYoe, "who has lived in Waterloo longer than any other person (p. 13), having moved to Waterloo in 1817, the year of his birth. According to Welch, DeYoe said: "I remember Joe Smith, the Mormon prophet, when he had only twelve followers and they met together for services in an old red house two miles south of the village" (p. 20). Larry C. Porter speculates that this "old red house" may have been the "Whitmer School House" (Porter 1971, 254).

F.
Miscellaneous Non-Resident SOURCES



Seneca Lake, near Fayette, New York, where many of the earliest converts were baptized. Photo by George E. Anderson, 1907.

1.
DAVID MARKS ACCOUNT, 1831

[David Marks], *The Life of David Marks* (Limerick, Maine: [Office of *The Morning Star*], [1831]), 340-41.

EDITORIAL NOTE

David Marks (1805-?) was born at Shendaken, Ulster County, New York. Although of Jewish ancestry, his parents raised him as a Calvinistic Baptist. In 1821, the fifteen-year-old Marks received an inward calling and embarked on his life-long mission to preach the gospel (see D. Marks 1831; M. Marks 1846). In 1829, he joined the Freewill Baptists in Phelps, New York. On 29 March 1830, only days before the official organization of the Mormon church, twenty-five-year-old Marks visited the Whitmer residence at Fayette, New York. Writing from Canandaigua on 8 April, he reported that he and others had "tarried in this place [Geneva] and enjoyed two good meetings. After this, we went to Fayette & held one meeting; then went to Lyons, ..." ("Journal of D. Marks," *The Morning Star* [Limerick, Maine] 4 [28 April 1830]: 1). This published journal excerpt failed to mention Marks's meeting with the Whitmers, but when published in book form the following year, the narrative included his encounter with the Whitmers, perhaps because of increasing interest in the new sect. He probably relied on his memory to complete this portion of his journal, and this may account for some of the inaccuracies that are evident in it.

... On Monday, March 15 [1830], we left Scriba, and after a tedious journey, arrived at Canandaigua.

During the week following, I journeyed about one hundred and fifty miles, and suffered much from a tedious storm. Sabbath, March 28, I preached twice to a small assembly in Geneva. Next day, we attended a meeting in Fayette, and tarried at the house of Mr. [Peter] Whitmer.[1] Here we saw two or three of his sons, and others to the number of eight, who said they were witnesses of a certain book just published, called the "*Golden Bible,*" or "*Book of Mormon.*" They affirmed, that an angel had showed them

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1. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

certain plates of metal, having the appearance of gold,[2] that were dug out of the ground by one Joseph Smith; that on these plates was written a history of the ten tribes of Israel which were lost,[3] and revelations to different prophets that arose among them. They stated the writing could be read by no person, except by the said Smith; and, that the Lord had inspired him to translate and publish the book,—that none, but twelve chosen witnesses, had been allowed to see these plates,[4] and that now they were "*hid* up unto the Lord." They further stated, that twelve apostles were to be appointed [cf. D&C 18], who would soon confirm their mission by miracles—and, that if any one read their bible and did not believe, they would be given up and lost for ever. These eight, we understood, were in company with Smith and three others. A copy right was secured by Smith in his own name.[5] The book contains about six [p. 340] hundred octavo pages of small print. Five thousand copies were published—and they said the angel told Smith to sell the book at a price which was one dollar and eight cents per copy more than the cost, that they "*might have the temporal profit,* as well as the spiritual."[6] ...

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2. Marks's association of the eight witnesses with an angelic appearance is interesting. It may be that David Whitmer related his experience to Marks, who assumed it was the common experience for all of the witnesses.

3. It was common for those unfamiliar with the Book of Mormon to mistakenly associate its tale of migrant Jews with the lost tribes of Israel.

4. Probably a reference to the three and eight witnesses and Joseph Smith.

5. See III.L.12, BOOK OF MORMON COPYRIGHT, 11 JUN 1829.

6. That the sales price of the Book of Mormon had been set by revelation is reported in III.A.15, HENRY HARRIS STATEMENT, CIRCA 1833; III.D.2, SYLVIA WALKER STATEMENT, 20 MAR 1885; and III.F.1, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEWS WITH JOHN A. CLARK, 1827 & 1828. In the second edition of Marks's autobiography published in 1846, the following was added: "They urged me to purchase a copy, and finally offered me one for $1.25. 'But,' said I, 'I understand you to say the angel told you to sell it for $1.75.' They replied, 'The angel said we might sell it for that sum, but did not say we should not sell it for any less.'"

2.
SIDNEY RIGDON TO OHIO SAINTS, 4 JANUARY 1831

Sidney Rigdon to Ohio Saints, 4 January 1831, E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed: or, A Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville, Ohio: E. D. Howe, 1834), 110-11.

EDITORIAL NOTE

By 7 December 1830, Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge had arrived at Fayette, New York, to meet the Mormon prophet. Sometime during the month, Smith and Rigdon visited Canandaigua, where Smith received a revelation instructing him to stop work on his Bible revision until he relocated to Ohio (D&C 37). At a church conference held on 2 January 1831 at the home of Peter Whitmer, Sr., in Fayette, Smith dictated a revelation commanding the New York church to gather to Ohio (D&C 38). Smith decided to send John Whitmer to Kirtland, Ohio, as the "presiding elder" of the church in that region. As Whitmer told it, after the conference and a brief visit to Colesville, "The Lord manifested himself to Joseph the Revelator and gave commandment for me to go to Ohio, and carry the commandments and revelations, with me, to comfort and strengthen my brethren in that land" (VI.B.1, JOHN WHITMER HISTORY, 1831, 10). The following letter, apparently written on 4 January, is Rigdon's introduction of Whitmer to the church in the Kirtland area. The *Painesville Telegraph* announced his arrival in Ohio: "A young man by the name of Whitmer arrived here last week from Manchester, New York, the seat of wonders, with a new batch of revelations from God, as he pretended, which have just been communicated to Joseph Smith" (18 January 1831). E. D. Howe reported that Rigdon's "communication caused great rejoicing in the congregation. They were then residing upon their 'eternal inheritance'" (Howe 1834, 111).

[4 January 1831][1]

I send you this letter by John Whitmer.[2] Receive him, for he is a

1. Because Rigdon refers to the 2 January 1831 revelation (D&C 38) as "one of the commandments, received day before yesterday," he apparently wrote his letter on 4 January 1831.

2. On John Whitmer (1802-78), see "Introduction to John Whitmer Collection."

brother greatly beloved, and an Apostle of this church.[3] With him we send all the revelations which we have received[4]; for the Lord has declared unto us that you [have been] pray[ing] unto him that Joseph Smith and myself [might] go speedily [p. 110] unto you [cf. D&C 39:16]; but at present it is not expedient for him [the Lord] to send us. He [the Lord] has required of us, therefore, to send unto you our beloved brother John, and with him the revelations which he [the Lord] has given unto us, by which you will see the reason why we cannot come at this time.[5] The Lord has made known unto us, some of his great things which he has laid up for them that love him, among which the fact (a glory of wonders it is) that you are living on the land of promise, and that *there* is the place of gathering, and from that place to the Pacific Ocean, God has dedicated to himself, not only in time, but through eternity, and he has given it to us and our children, not only while time lasts, but we shall have it again in eternity, as you will see by one of the commandments, received day before yesterday.[6] Therefore, be it known to you, brethren, that you are dwelling on your eternal inheritance; for which, cease not to give ceaseless glory, praise and thanksgiving to the God of Heaven.—Yes, lift up your heads with joy, for the kingdom is ours till the Savior comes, even so, Amen [cf. D&C 38:9, 15]—therefore, prepare your hearts to receive salvation which God has sent unto you, knowing that they [the revelations] have come from God; and know assuredly if you receive them, you shall re-

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3. The title of "apostle" is probably due to the close association of elder and apostle in the "Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ" (D&C 20:38).

4. Joseph Smith reported that about July 1830 "I began to arrange and copy the revelations which we had received from time to time, in which I was assisted by John Whitmer, who now resided with me" in Harmony, Pennsylvania (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 50).

5. A revelation dictated in Canandaigua sometime in December 1830 states: "Ye shall not go until ye have preached my gospel in those parts, and have strengthened up the church whithersoever it is found, and more especially in Colesville; for, behold, they pray unto me in much faith" (D&C 37:2).

6. During a church conference on 2 January 1831, Smith dictated a revelation commanding New York Mormons to gather in Ohio and declaring: "I hold forth and deign to give unto you greater riches, even a land of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey, upon which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh; and I will give it unto you for the land of your inheritance, if you seek it with all your hearts. And this shall be my covenant with you, ye shall have it for the land of your inheritance, and for the inheritance of your children forever, while the earth shall stand, and ye shall possess it again in eternity, no more to pass away" (D&C 38:18-20).

ceive greater things, yes, things unspeakable and full of glory—"such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive [cf. Isa. 64:4; 1 Cor. 2:9]," for our God hath in visions shown it unto me.[7] Therefore, I write with the greatest certainty of these things which he hath prepared for us—yes, even us, forever, who receive the revelations of the last days, are the very people of whom the prophets spoke, and the very saints who shall rejoice with Jesus[.]

[Sidney Rigdon]

7. Ezra Booth reported in 1831 that Rigdon "has been favored with many extraordinary visions, in some of which he saw Kirtland with the surrounding country, consecrated as the promised land, and the Churches in the state of N.Y. expected to receive their everlasting inheritance in the state of Ohio, and this expectation was grounded upon Rigdon's visions, while he was in the state of N.Y." (VI.F.3, EZRA BOOTH ACCOUNTS, 1831).

3.
EZRA BOOTH ACCOUNTS, 1831

1. Ezra Booth to Ira Eddy, 24 October 1831, "Mormonism—No. III" [letter III], *Ohio Star* (Ravenna, Ohio) 2 (27 October 1831): 3; reprinted in E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed* (Painesville, OH: E. D. Howe, 1834), 186-87.
2. Ezra Booth to Ira Eddy, 29 November 1831, "Mormonism—Nos. VIII—IX" [letter VIII], *Ohio Star,* 8 December 1831, 1; rpt. in *Mormonism Unvailed,* 215-16.
3. Ezra Booth to Ira Eddy, 6 December 1831, "Mormonism—Nos. VIII—IX" [letter IX], *Ohio Star,* 8 December 1831, 1; rpt. in *Mormonism Unvailed,* 217.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On Ezra Booth (1792-?), who was ordained a high priest in June 1831, was sent on a mission to Missouri and soon after apostatized, and for information about his nine letters that were published in the *Ohio Star,* see the introduction to III.F.4, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEW WITH EZRA BOOTH, 1831. Below are extracts from three of his letters to the Reverend Ira Eddy of Ravenna, Ohio, which deal with Mormon origins in New York.

[*1. Letter to Ira Eddy, 24 October 1831*]

Nelson, Portage Co. Oct. 24, 1831.

REV. & DEAR SIR—

... [Joseph] Smith is the only person at present, to my knowledge, who pretends to hold converse with the inhabitants of the celestial world. It seems from his statements, that he can have access to them, when and where he pleases. He does not pretend that he sees them with his natural, but with his spiritual eyes; and he says he can see them as well with his eyes shut, as with them open. So also in translating.—The subject stands before his eyes in print, but it matters not whether his eyes are open or shut; he can see as well one way as the other.

You have probably read the testimony of the three witnesses appended to the Book of Mormon. These witnesses testify, that an angel appeared to them, and presented them the golden plates, and the voice of God declared it to be a Divine Record. To this they frequently testify, in the presence of

large congregations.[1] When in Missouri, I had an opportunity to examine a commandment given to these witnesses, previous to their seeing the plates [D&C 17]. They were informed that they should see and hear those things by faith, and then they should testify to the world, as though they had seen and heard, as I see a man, and hear his voice: but after all, it amounts simply to this; that by faith or imagination, they saw the plates and the angel, and by faith or imagination, they heard the voice of the Lord.

Smith describes an angel, as having the appearance of "a tall, slim, well built, handsome man, with a bright pillar upon his head." The Devil once, he says, appeared to him in the same form, excepting upon his head he had a "black pillar," and by this mark, he was able to distinguish him from the former.

It passes for a current fact in the Mormonite church, that there are immense treasures in the earth, especially in those places in the State of N.Y. from whence many of the Mormonites emigrated last spring: and when they become sufficiently purified, these treasures are to be poured into the lap of their church; and then, to use their own language, they are to be the richest people in the world. These treasures were discovered several years since, by means of the dark glass, the same with which Smith says he translated most of the Book of Mormon—Several of those persons, together with Smith, who were formerly unsuccessfully engaged in digging and searching for these treasures, now reside in this county, and from themselves I received this information.

Yours, affectionately,
EZRA BOOTH.

REV. I. EDDY.

[*2. Letter, 29 November 1831*]

Nelson, Portage Co. Nov. 29, 1831.

REV. & DEAR SIR—

... Smith apprehended a revival in the department of written inspiration, from another quarter; and hence Cowdery[2] was commissioned to commence an attack, and suppress the enemy, before he had acquired sufficient stability and strength, so as to become formidable. "Thou shalt take thy brother Hiram between him and thee alone, and tell him the things he hath

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1. See introduction to VI.G.1, TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES, JUN 1829.

2. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

written from that stone," &c. [D&C 28:11] Hiram Page,[3] one of the eight witnesses, and also one of the "money diggers," found a smooth stone, upon which there appeared to be a writing, which when transcribed upon paper, disappeared from the stone, and another impression appeared in its place. This when copied, vanished as the former had done, and so it continued, alternately appearing and disappearing; in the meanwhile, he continued to write, until he had written over considerable paper. It bore most striking marks of a Mormonite revelation, and was received as an authentic document by most of the Mormonites, till Smith, by his superior sagacity, discovered it to be a Satanic fraud.[4] ...

Yours affectionately,
EZRA BOOTH.

REV I. EDDY.

[*3. Letter, 6 December 1831*]

Nelson, Portage Co. Dec. 6, 1831.

REV. & DEAR SIR—

... Rigdon[5] is one who has ascended to the summit of Mormonism; and his vision stands as the foundation of his knowledge. He frequently affirms, that these things are not a matter of faith with him, but of absolute knowledge. He has been favored with many extraordinary visions, in some of which he saw Kirtland with the surrounding country, consecrated as the promised land, and the Churches in the state of N.Y. expected to receive their everlasting inheritance in the state of Ohio, and this expectation was grounded upon Rigdon's visions, while he was in the state of N.Y. These visions are considered by the Church as entitled to no credit, and laid aside as mere rubbish.[6] ...

Yours affectionately,
EZRA BOOTH.

REV. I. EDDY.

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3. On Hiram Page (1800-52), see introduction to VI.C.1, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM MCLELLIN, 30 MAY 1847.

4. See I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 54-58.

5. On Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), see introduction to I.A.13, SIDNEY RIGDON ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1836.

6. Regarding Rigdon's visions, see VI.F.2, SIDNEY RIGDON TO OHIO SAINTS, 4 JAN 1831; and VI.F.5, SIDNEY RIGDON REMINISCENCE, 1844.

4.
WILLIAM SCOBY OBITUARY, 1834

William Scoby, "Obituary," *The Evening and The Morning Star* (Kirtland, Ohio) 2 (March 1834): 139.

EDITORIAL NOTE

William Scoby (ca. 1811-33) joined the Mormons in Fayette, New York, presumably in 1830. Probably in June 1830, Scoby met Almira Mack, daughter of Stephen and Temperance Mack of Pontiac, Michigan, who was visiting her aunt, Lucy Mack Smith, in Manchester, New York. Soon after, William and Almira were married (Porter 1971, 261). In 1831 they moved to Ohio, where William was ordained a priest on 25 October 1831 (Cannon and Cook 1983, 25). The last two years of his life were spent in Pontiac, Michigan, near his wife's relatives. Only twenty-two years of age, William became ill and suddenly died on 4 December 1833. The following obituary appeared in the March 1834 issue of *The Evening and the Morning Star* under Oliver Cowdery's editorship.

DIED on the 4th of December, last, near Pontiac, Michigan Territory, of consumption, brother WILLIAM SCOBY, formerly of Fayette, Seneca county, N.Y. aged 22 years. Brother S[coby]. received and obeyed the everlasting gospel, in Fayette, after which he emigrated to this country [Ohio] in 1831. For the last two years of his life he has resided in Michigan. Our personal acquaintance with bro. S[coby]. was very limited, but we are credibly informed that he was a worthy member of the church of Christ, and that he died as he lived, in the full assurance of a glorious resurrection at the appearing of our Lord. His death should have been noticed by us ere this; but the letter which gave the intelligence of his decease did not bring the account of his age, &c. ...

5.
SIDNEY RIGDON REMINISCENCE, 1844

"Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* (Nauvoo, Illinois) 5 (1 May 1844): 522-24; reprinted in *The Prophet* (New York City), 8 June 1844.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Sidney Rigdon[1] was cut off from the church in 1843 after plotting to have Joseph Smith arrested and taken to Missouri. He was forgiven and subsequently reinstated as Smith's counselor in the First Presidency. On 19 March 1844, Rigdon became a member of the Council of Fifty, a secret group designed to further the church's political interests (Quinn 1980; M. Hill 1989, xvi, 139-40). On 6 April 1844, Rigdon spoke at the conference held in Nauvoo, Illinois. In the presence of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, he recounted events of the early church. In the hand of Willard Richards, Joseph Smith's journal records: "Pres[iden]t Sidney Rigdon arose and ... gave a brief history of the origin and progress of the Church" (Faulring 1987, 463). Rigdon's remarks were published the following month in the *Times and Seasons,* then in *The Prophet,* a publication of the church in New York, edited by William Smith.

... Elder Sidney Rigdon then rose and said, ... The circumstances by which we are now surrounded points out the principles of my discourse—the history of this church which I have known from its infancy. ... I recollect in the year 1830, I met the whole church of Christ in a little old log house about 20 feet square, near Waterloo, N.Y.[2] and we began to talk about the kingdom of God as if we had the world at our command; we talked with great confidence, and talked big things, although we were not many people,

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1. On Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), see introduction to I.A.13, SIDNEY RIGDON ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1836.

2. Lucy Smith described Rigdon's arrival at Waterloo: "The following december Joseph [Smith] came with his wife again to Waterloo and appointed a Meeting at our house[.] while he was preaching Sydney ~~and~~ Rigdon and Edward Partridge came in. ..." (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:Frag. 9). It is doubtful that the "whole church" was present at this meeting since Oliver Cowdery and three others had gone to Missouri and Joseph Smith, Sr., was still in jail and Hyrum Smith and family were in Colesville with the Knights.

we had big feelings; we knew fourteen years ago that the church would become as large as it is to-day; we were as big then, as we shall ever be; we began to talk like men in authority and power—we looked upon the men of the earth as grass hoppers; if we did not see *this* people, we saw by vision, the church of God, a thousand times larger[3]; and when men would come in, they would say we wanted to upse [upset] the government, [p. 522] although we were not enough to well man a farm, or meet a woman with a milk pail; all the elders, all the members, met in conference, in a room 20 feet square. I recollect elder Phelps[4] being put in jail for reading the Book of Mormon.[5] He came to see us, and expressed great astonishment,[6] and left us apparently pondering in his heart; he afterward came to Kirtland, Ohio, and said he was a convert.[7] Many things were taught, believed, and preached, then, which have since come to pass; we knew the whole world would laugh at us, so we concealed ourselves; and there was much excitement about our secret meetings, charging us with designs against the government, and with laying plans to get money, &c. which never existed in the heads of any one else, and if we had talked in public, we should have been ridiculed more than we were, the world being entirely ignorant of the testimony of the prophets and without knowledge of what God was about to do; treated all we said with pretended contempt, and much ridicule; and had they have hea[r]d all we said, it would have made it worse for us; we talked about the people coming as doves to the windows, that all nations should flock unto it; that they should come bending to the standard of Jesus, saying, our fathers have taught falsehood, and things in which there is no profit; and of whole nations being born in one day; we talked such big things that men could not bear them, and they not

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3. Ezra Booth reported that while in New York in December 1830 and January 1831, Sidney Rigdon had "many extraordinary visions, in some of which he saw Kirtland with the surrounding country, consecrated as the promised land, and the Churches in the state of N.Y. expected to receive their everlasting inheritance in the state of Ohio" (VI.F.3, EZRA BOOTH ACCOUNTS, 1831). Previous to the arrival of Rigdon, Smith had sent Oliver Cowdery and others to Missouri in search of a location for the New Jerusalem temple.

4. On William W. Phelps (1792-1872), see introduction to III.G.6, OLIVER COWDERY TO W. W. PHELPS, 7 SEP 1834.

5. See III.I.9, W. W. PHELPS TO OLIVER COWDERY, 21 FEB 1835.

6. Phelps said that he met Smith and Rigdon on 24 December 1830 (III.I.9, W. W. PHELPS TO OLIVER COWDERY, 21 FEB 1835; III.I.2, W. W. PHELPS TO E. D. HOWE, 15 JAN 1831).

7. Phelps was baptized on 16 June 1831.

only ridiculed us for what we did say in public, but threatened and inflicted much personal abuse, and had they heard all we said, their violence would have been insupportable. God had great things to say for the salvation of the world, which, if they had been told to the public, would have brought persecution upon us unto death; so we were obliged to retire to our secret chambers, and commune ourselves with God. [He here referred to the prayer of elder Phelps concerning our having arrived at the age to choose our own guardian.][8] If we had told the people what our eyes behold this day, we should not be believed; but the rascals would have shed our blood, if we had only told them what we believed. There we sat in secret and beheld the glorious visions, and powers of the kingdom of heaven, pass and repass; we had not a mighty congregation to shelter us—if a mob came upon us, we had to run and hide ourselves to save our lives. The time has now come to tell why we held secret meetings. We were maturing plans fourteen years ago which we can now tell; were we maturing plans to corrupt the world, to destroy the peace of society? Let fourteen years experience of the church tell the story. The church never would have been here, if we had not done as we did in secret. The cry of false prophet and imposter rolled upon us. I do not know that any thing has taken place in the history of this church, which we did not then believe; it was written upon our hearts, and never could be taken away; it was indelibly engraved, no power beneath yonder heavens could obliterate it. This was the period when God laid the foundation of the church, and he laid it firmly, truly, and upon eternal truth. If any man says it is not the work of God, I know they lie. ... These were the beginning of good days; shut up in a room, eating nothing but dry johnny cake and buttermilk; every man who had a little farm, or clothes, sold them and distributed what he had among the rest, and did the best they could. I had nothing to eat, nothing to wear, and yet it was the beginning of good days. ... Would you not be astonished if even now we should tell the glories and the privileges of the saints of God to you, and to the world, we should be ridiculed; and no wonder we shut it up in secret; if we were to tell you [p. 523] when Jehovah looked on, lo it is beauty, it is heaven, it is felicity to look on; I should marvel if it were otherwise; if a man tells you one glory or one message, he is learning another at the same time. Do not be astonished then if we even yet have secret meetings; asking God for things for your benefit. Do not be afraid, go back to the commencement of this church, and see what was concocted then; there was no evil concocted when we first held secret meetings, and it is the same now. ... I am going to tell of something that surprised me at the beginning of the church; I

8. Bracketed material in original.

have handled, heard, seen and known things which I have not yet told. After the church began to grow, it was favored with monstrous wise men; they had so much wisdom that they could dispute what God said, and what his servant said. They were opposed to virtue; they would say they had revelations and visions, and were as certain that God had given it, as I was that the devil had. ... I do not know whether there are any of these wise men here this morning; I have merely given this as a part of the history of this church. I am disposed to give some reasons why salvation only belongs to the kingdom of God, and to that alone. I will endeavor to show why salvation belongs to us more peculiarly, in contradistinction of all other bodies; will this be clear enough? I discover one thing, mankind have labored under one universal mistake about this, viz: Salvation was distinct from government; i.e.; that I can build a church without government, and that thing have power to save me. When God sets up a system of salvation, he sets up a system of a government; when I speak of government I mean what I say; I mean a government that shall rule over temporal and spiritual affairs. ...

6.
PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY (PART II), CIRCA 1854

Parley P. Pratt, *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt,* ed. Parley P. Pratt, Jr. (New York: Russell Brothers, 1874), 42-46.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On Parley P. Pratt (1807-57) and his autobiography, see introduction to III.K.16, PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY (PART I), CIRCA 1854.

... I now returned immediately to Hyrum Smith's[1] residence [in Manchester, New York], and demanded baptism at his hands. I tarried with him one night, and the next day we walked some twenty-five miles to the residence of Mr. [Peter] Whitmer,[2] in Seneca County. Here we arrived in the evening, and found a most welcome reception. [p. 42]

This was the family, several of whose names were attached to the Book of Mormon as witnesses—Mr. Joseph Smith having translated much of the book in Whitmer's chamber.

I found the little branch of the church in this place full of joy, faith, humility and charity. We rested the night, and on the next day, being about the 1st of September, 1830, I was baptized by the hand of an Apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ, by the name of Oliver Cowdery.[3] This took place in Seneca Lake, a beautiful and transparent sheet of water in Western New York.

A meeting was held the same evening, and after singing a hymn and

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1. On Hyrum Smith (1800-44), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 12.

2. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

3. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection." In 1858, Pratt recalled: "About the first of September, A.D. 1830, I was baptized by the hand of an Apostle, named Oliver Cowdery. This took place in Seneca Lake. I was confirmed the same day and ordained an Elder at the house of Father Whitmer, Seneca county, N.Y." (Parley P. Pratt, "History of Parley P. Pratt," *Deseret News* 8 [19 May 1858]: 53).

prayer, Elder Cowdery and others proceeded to lay their hands upon my head in the name of Jesus, for the gift of the Holy Ghost. After which I was ordained to the office of an Elder in the Church, which included authority to preach, baptize, administer the sacrament, administer the Holy Spirit, by the laying on of hands in the name of Jesus Christ, and to take the lead of meetings of worship [D&C 20:38-45].

I now felt that I had authority in the ministry.

On the next Sabbath[4] I preached to a large concourse of people, assembled at the house of a Mr. [Philip?] Burroughs.[5] The Holy Ghost came upon me mightily. I spoke the word of God with power, reasoning out of the Scriptures and the Book of Mormon. The people were convinced, overwhelmed in tears, and four heads of families came forward, expressing their faith, and were baptized.

My work was now completed, for which I took leave of my wife and the canal boat some two or three weeks previous.

I now took leave of the little branch of the church with which I had been associated, and pursued my journey to the land of my fathers and of my boyhood.

I found my wife in health and spirits, enjoying herself with her friends. I also found my father and mother, [p. 43] friends and kindred, and, among others, my good old aunt and cousins, at the old homestead, where I always found a welcome reception.

This was a pleasant and retired mountain valley, consisting of a beautiful farm and a small and convenient house, out-buildings, orchard, meadow, etc., encircled on the south, west and north with a curve of hills, consisting of farming lands and pasture, and their summits and bosoms partially clothed with a beautiful forest of pine and chestnut; while the scene opened to the southeast in a descending landscape to a beautiful vale of some miles in extent, filled with flourishing farms and dwellings, and watered by a winding stream; while far beyond stretched other hills and pine-clad mountains, and the spire of a church and a small town were seen nestling among the hills at two miles distance.

This was the residence of my aunt [Lovina] Van Cott,[6] and the place where I had spent some of the happiest seasons of my youth. My aunt had three children—an only son, and two daughters. These were now in the

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4. The first Sunday after Pratt's baptism would be 5 September 1830.

5. On Philip Burroughs, see VI.E.2, LEE YOST TO DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., 18 MAY 1897, n. 14.

6. On Lovina Van Cott, see III.K.16, PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY (PART I), CIRCA 1854, n. 7.

bloom of early youth, and were fast advancing to a state of maturity. Her husband had died at an early day, after an illness of seven years; and here lived the widow and orphans, surrounded with peace and plenty, blooming with health, and smiling with innocence and joy. Retired from the throng of busy, boisterous life, and strangers to most of its woes, ills and corruptions, the stranger who happened there was welcome; the hungry were fed, the naked were clothed, and, above all, the kindred found a hearty reception. In short, it was a spot, in all respects, adapted to retirement and contemplation, where the poet and the novelist would find a thousand things to please the imagination, and to swell their favorite volumes.

In this visit to my native place, there was one family greatly missed by me. I felt keenly the disappointment at not seeing them—that of my old employer, Wm. S. Her[p. 44]rick.[7] He had moved to the West, and his house was occupied by strangers.

I now commenced my labors in good earnest. I addressed crowded audiences almost every day, and the people, who had known me from a child, seemed astonished—knowing that I had had but little opportunity of acquiring knowledge by study; and while many were interested in the truth, some began to be filled with envy, and with a lying, persecuting spirit. My father, mother, aunt Van Cott, and many others, believed the truth in part; but my brother Orson,[8] a youth of nineteen years, received it with all his heart, and was baptized at that time,[9] and has ever since spent his days in the ministry.

It was during my labors in these parts, in the autumn of 1830, that a very singular and extraordinary sign was shown in the heavens, which I will here describe.

I had been on a visit to a singular people called Shakers, at New Lebanon, about seven miles from my aunt Van Cott's, and was returning that distance, on foot, on a beautiful evening of September. The sky was without a cloud; the stars shone out beautifully, and all nature seemed reposing in quiet, as I pursued my solitary way, wrapt in deep meditations on the predictions of the holy prophets; the signs of the times; the approaching advent of the Messiah, to reign on the earth, and the important revelations of the Book of Mormon; my heart filled with gratitude to God that He had opened the eyes of my understanding to receive the truth, and with sorrow for the blind-

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7. William S. Herrick is listed in the 1820 census of New Lebanon, Columbia County, New York, as being over forty-five years of age (1820:276).

8. On Orson Pratt (1811-81), see introduction to I.A.16, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1839.

9. Parley baptized his brother Orson at Canaan, Columbia County, New York, on 19 September 1830.

ness of those who lightly rejected the same, when my attention was aroused by a sudden appearance of a brilliant light which shone around me, above the brightness of the sun. I cast my eyes upward to inquire from whence the light came, when I perceived a long chain of light extended in the heavens, very bright, and of a deep fiery red. It at first stood stationary in a horizontal position; at length bending in the center, the [p. 45] two ends approached each other with a rapid movement, so as to form an exact square. In this position it again remained stationary for some time, perhaps a minute, and then again the ends approached each other with the same rapidity, and again ceased to move, remaining stationary, for perhaps a minute, in the form of a compass; it then commenced a third movement in the same manner, and closed like the closing of a compass, the whole forming a straight line like a chain doubled. It again remained stationary for a minute, and then faded away.

I fell upon my knees in the street, and thanked the Lord for so marvellous a sign of the coming of the Son of Man.

Some persons may smile at this, and say that all these exact movements were by chance; but, for my part, I could as soon believe that the letters of the alphabet would be formed by chance, and be placed so as to spell my name, as to believe that these signs (known only to the wise) could be formed and shown forth by chance. ...

7.
PARLEY P. PRATT REMINISCENCE (PART II), 1856

Parley P. Pratt, "Discourse By Elder Parley P. Pratt, Bowery, Sunday, September 7th, 1856. Reported by J[ohn]. V. Long," *Deseret News* 6 (24 December 1856): 332.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On Parley Parker Pratt (1807-57), see introduction to III.K.16, PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY (PART I), CIRCA 1854.

... There are some, I presume, in this congregation who personally have been strangers to me and who have not heard my testimony. I have been acquainted in this Church and connected with it, from the first year of its organization in the wilderness of western New York. It was organized on the 6th day of April, 1830, and I was baptized into it about the first of the September following.

When I first became a member of this Church, one small room could have contained all the members there then were in the world, and that too without being crowded, for at times I presume there were not fifty. ...

As before stated, I fulfilled my two appointments;[1] crowds heard me and were interested, and solicited me to make more appointments[.] I told them that I would not, that I had a duty to perform for myself. I bid them farewell, and returned to Hyrum Smith, who took me to a place, about twenty-five miles off, in Seneca county, New York. He there introduced me to the three witnesses whose names appear at the beginning of the Book of Mormon, also to the eight witnesses. I conversed with Oliver Cowdery,[2] one of the three witnesses, and on the next day we repaired to Seneca Lake, where I was baptized by Oliver Cowdery, then the second Apostle in this Church, and a man who had received the ministration of an angel, as you can learn by reading his testimony.[3]

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1. See III.K.21, PARLEY P. PRATT REMINISCENCE (PART I), 1845.

2. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

3. See III.G.6, OLIVER COWDERY TO W. W. PHELPS, 7 SEP 1834, 14-15.

After being baptized, I was confirmed in a little meeting during the same day, was full of the Holy Ghost, and was ordained an Elder. This transpired on the first day of September, 1830, and from that day to this I have endeavored to magnify my calling, and to honor the priesthood which God has given me by testifying, to both small and great, of the things that he has revealed in these last days. ...

8.
ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, 1858

[Orson Pratt], "History of Brigham Young. History of Orson Pratt," *Deseret News* 8 (2 June 1858): 61-62; reprinted in the *Millennial Star* 27 (28 January 1865): 55.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On Orson Pratt (1811-81), see introduction to I.A.16, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1839.

... [T]he early impressions of morality and religion, instilled into my mind by my parents, always remained with me; and I often felt a great anxiety to be prepared for a future state; but never commenced, in real earnest, to seek after the Lord, until the autumn of 1829. I then began to pray very fervently, repenting of every sin. In the silent shades of night, while others were slumbering upon their pillows, I often retired to some secret place in the lonely fields or solitary wilderness, and bowed before the Lord, and prayed for hours with a broken heart and a contrite spirit: this was my comfort and delight. The greatest desire of my heart was for the Lord to manifest His will concerning me. I continued to pray in this fervent manner until September, 1830, at which time two Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, came into the neighborhood, one of which was my brother Parley. They held several meetings which I attended.

Being convinced of the divine authenticity of the doctrine they taught, I was baptized September 19, 1830.[1] This was my birth-day, being nineteen years old. I was the only person in the country who received and obeyed the message. Shortly after my baptism the Elders left.

In October, 1830, I traveled westward over two hundred miles to see Joseph Smith, the Prophet. I found him in Fayette, Seneca county, N.Y., residing in the house of Mr. [Peter] Whit[p. 61]mer.[2] I soon became intimately acquainted with this good man, and also with the witnesses of the Book of

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1. He was baptized by his brother Parley P. Pratt in Canaan, New York (see VI.F.6, PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY [PART II], CIRCA 1854).

2. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

Mormon. By my request, on the 4th of Nov., the Prophet Joseph inquired of the Lord for me, and received the revelation published in the Doctrine and Covenants, sec. lvi. [D&C 34][3]

On the 1st day of December, 1830, I was confirmed, and in accordance with the word of the Lord, I was ordained an Elder under the hands of the Prophet. My first mission was to Colesville, Broome county, N.Y., where I commenced to open my mouth in public meetings, and teach the things of God, as the Holy Ghost gave me utterance.[4] The same month I returned from Colesville to Fayette, accompanied by Hyrum Smith.[5]

On the 2nd of January, 1831,[6] I attended a conference at the house of Father [Peter] Whitmer; and soon after Elder Samuel H. Smith[7] and myself commenced laboring for one of the Saints, by the name of Joseph Coe,[8] to assist him in making preparations to remove to Ohio according to the revela-

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3. Concerning this revelation, Orson Pratt stated: "He [Smith] retired into the chamber of old Father Whitmer. ... John Whitmer acted as his scribe, and I accompanied him into the chamber, for he had told me that it was my privilege to have the word of the Lord" (Young et al. 1853-86, 17:290). Pratt gave the following account to James R. B. Vancleave: "He [Pratt] says that after he was ordained an Elder in the Church of Christ, he was anxious to know what his mission was and would be, and at Peter Whitmer Sr's residence he asked Joseph whether he could not ascertain what his mission was, and Joseph answered him that he would see, & asked Pratt and John Whitmer to go upstairs with him, and on arriving there Joseph produced a small stone called a seer stone, and putting it into a Hat soon commenced speaking and asked Elder P[ratt]. to write as he would speak, but being too young and timid and feeling his unworthiness he asked whether Bro. John W[hitmer]. could not write it, and the Prophet said that he could: Then came the revelation to the three named given Nov. 4th 1830 as can be found in the book of D[octrine]. & Covenants" (James R. B. Vancleave to Joseph Smith III, 29 September 1878, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri; cited in Cook 1991, 239-40).

4. See I.A.5, JOSEPH SMITH TO COLESVILLE SAINTS, 2 DEC 1830.

5. On Hyrum Smith (1800-44), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 12.

6. See VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 2 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830 & 2 JAN 1831; and I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 88-90.

7. On Samuel Harrison Smith (1808-44), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 13.

8. Joseph Coe (1784-1854) eventually lost faith and was excommunicated in 1838 (L. Cook 1981, 86-87; Jessee 1992, 536; Backman 1983, 17). Perhaps this is the Joseph Coe who is listed as being in his forties in the 1830 Macedon, Wayne County, New York, census (1830:99).

tion [D&C 38] given at the conference on the 2nd of January. And in a few weeks, Elder Samuel H. Smith and myself started on foot for Kirtland, Ohio, a distance of several hundred miles, to which place Joseph, the Prophet, had just previously moved. ...

9.
ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, 1859

[Orson Pratt], "A Discourse by Elder Orson Pratt, delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, January 2, 1859. Reported by G[eorge]. D. Watt," *Journal of Discourses of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* 26 vols. (Liverpool: Albert Carrington [and others], 1853-1886), 7:29-31.

EDITORIAL NOTE

On Orson Pratt (1811-81), see introduction to I.A.16, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1839.

... We are told, in the beginning of the Book of Mormon, that three men—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris, saw the plates, or the original from which this book was translated by Joseph Smith, jun.[1] ... They had learned, by reading the manuscript from which this book was printed, that the Lord, when he should bring this book to light in the latter days, would bear testimony of it in a miraculous and wonderful manner to three witnesses, besides the translator [2 Ne. 27: 12]. These three men, after having learned this fact, met together, and went and saw Mr. Smith, and inquired of him whether it would be their privilege to behold these plates and know from heaven that this book was true. Joseph Smith inquired of the Lord concerning the matter; and the Lord gave them a promise that, if they would sufficiently humble themselves, they should have this privilege [D&C 17].

They, in no connection with Mr. Smith, who made the fourth individual, went out into the open field, near a grove of timber, a little distance from the house of [Peter] Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca county, New York. They bowed down before the Lord in broad daylight—not in the night; so there could be no deception: they humbled themselves before him, called upon his holy name with all their hearts; and while they were thus engaged in calling upon the name of the Lord, they saw in the heavens above a glorious light, and a personage descending. This personage came down and stood before them: he laid his hands upon the head of David Whitmer as one of the three witnesses, and said, "Blessed be the Lord and they that keep his commandments[2];" and then he took the plates and turned them over, leaf after leaf, ex-

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1. See VI.G.1, TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES, JUN 1829.
2. This is the only known source that mentions the angel laying hands on

cepting a certain portion of the leaves that were sealed up, which Mr. [p. 29] Smith was not permitted to translate; but that portion he had translated was turned over, leaf after leaf, and presented before their eyes, and they saw the engravings upon the plates.

This angel, clothed in brightness and glory, stood before them with the plates in his hands, showing them the engravings upon them. They also heard the voice of the Lord out of the heavens, commanding them to bear record of the things they saw and heard to all nations, kindred, tongues, and people. ...

... Are they the only witnesses? No: there are eight other men, whose names and testimony I have read before this congregation,[3]—persons with whom I am individually acquainted as well as with the translator and the three witnesses I have already named. I have been at the house where this Church was organized. I have seen the place where the angel descended and showed them the plates.

Eight other witnesses testify that Joseph Smith showed them the plates, and that they saw the engravings [p. 30] upon them, and that they had the appearance of ancient work and curious workmanship. They describe these plates as being about the thickness of common tin, about eight inches in length, and from six to seven in breadth. Upon each side of the leaves of these plates there were fine engravings, which were stained with a black, hard stain, so as to make the letters more legible and easier to be read.[4] Through the back of the plates were three rings, which held them together, and through which a rod might easily be passed, serving as a greater convenience for carrying them; the construction and form of the plates being similar to the gold, brass, and lead plates of the ancient Jews in Palestine.[5] ...

David Whitmer and blessing him. Whitmer's own descriptions of the event are consistently non-physical and subjective (see "Introduction to David Whitmer Collection"). Joseph Smith's account only mentions the angel addressing Whitmer (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 25). See also VI.A.5, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 22-23 DEC 1877, where Whitmer states that these words were actually spoken to him in a vision he had prior to seeing the plates with the other witnesses.

3. See III.L.13, TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES, JUN 1829.

4. This is the only source which mentions that the engraved characters were stained.

5. Johann Jahn wrote in 1823 that "those [ancient] books, which were inscribed on tablets of wood, lead, brass, or ivory, were connected together by rings at the back, through which a rod was passed to carry them by" (*Jahn's Biblical Archaeology,* trans. Thomas C. Upham [Andover, MA: Flagg and Gould, 1823], 95-96). Cf. *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (January 1833), in which W. W. Phelps quotes from Jahn's book (see also Vogel 1986, 80, n. 47).

10.
WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO JOSEPH SMITH III, JULY & SEPTEMBER 1872

William E. McLellin to Joseph Smith III, July and September 1872, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

EDITORIAL NOTE

William E. McLellin[1] apparently began writing his letter to Joseph Smith III[2] in July 1872 and completed it on 8 September. Toward the end of his life, McLellin became the friend and associate of David Whitmer, who was most likely the source for much of McLellin's information about Fayette, New York.

Independence, Jackson Co. Mo. July 1872.

To President Joseph Smith,

... When Joseph delivered the 116 pages of the translation to Martin Harris,[3] his plates, his Interpreters, and his gift were taken from him for some two months.[4] The Plates and gift of translation was restored to him, but not the Interpreters. He translated the entire book of Mormon by the use of a little stone he had in his possession before he obtained the plates. His deliverance of those pages was a great blunder! I had a long talk with O[liver]. Cowdery[5] in Wisconsin in 1847.[6] I asked him this question, "To what did

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1. On William E. McLellin (1806-83), see introduction to III.K.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO SAMUEL MCLELLIN, 4 AUG 1832.

2. On Joseph Smith III (1832-1914), see introduction to I.F.3, EMMA SMITH BIDAMON INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH SMITH III, FEB 1879.

3. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

4. While I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 10, says the plates were taken back in July 1828 for "a few days," McLellin is supported by VI.A.30, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH J. M. HUBBLE, NOV 1886, 5, which has three months, and I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:89, 94, which says they were returned in September 1828.

5. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

6. Oliver Cowdery lived briefly in Elkhorn, Wisconsin, where he unsuccessfully ran for the state legislature in 1848 (Cook 1981, 14).

you ordain J[oseph]. Smith on the 6th of April 1830." He said, "I ordained him Prophet, Seer &c. just as the revelation said to me" [cf. D&C 21:1, 10-11]. When he finished the translation of the Book [of Mormon,] thereafter he did not see—that is he did not use his stone. So say all those who were intimate with him at the time. In Oct[ober]. 1831 I wrote a revelation as he delivered it [D&C 66]. And I know he used no stone to see then. I set by [him] hours and heard him (what you call) translate the Bible. I know that he used no stone then. ... I have seen the stone by which he translated often. But I ask was he a Seer on the day the church was organized? Did he have the interpreters. I say no! distinctly no!! No man can be a Seer without the means [cf. Mos. 8:13; 28:16]. He did not possess the means hence was not, nor could not be [a] Seer.[7] ...

... But again, Joseph had a revelation for Oliver and friends to go to Canada to get a copy-right secured in that Dominion to the Book of Mormon. It proved so false that he never would have it recorded, printed or published. I have seen and read a copy of it, so that I know it existed. So do all those connected with him at the time.[8] ... [p. 1]

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7. David Whitmer expressed a similar view in VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, ADDRESS, 1887, 33-34, 35.

8. On 19 February 1877, McLellin wrote to John L. Traughber about the "Canadian Revelation": "When the Book [of Mormon] was translated, and at the printer's with the copy-right secured, Joseph delivered a long revelation for O. Cowdery and others to go to Kingston in Canada, and get a copy-right secured in that dominion, to the book, in order to sell it and make money out of its sale. They went, but did not succeed; and the revelation proved so false that Joseph never would have it printed or put with his other revelations either" (William E. McLellin to John L. Traughber, 19 February 1877, J. L. Traughber Collection, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah). On another occasion, McLellin wrote to Traughber: "J[oseph]. Smith's revelation for Cowdery to go to Canada was never printed. M[artin]. Harris had the copy that I read, in manuscript" (William E. McLellin to John L. Traughber, 7 May 1877, J. L. Traughber Collection, Marriott Library). McLellin also wrote in his notebook: "Sometime in 1829 he [Smith] professed to receive a revelation from the Lord directing Oliver and others to go to Kingston in Canada in order to obtain a copy-right in that dominion, for the Book of Mormon. They went but failed, and returned without it. The revelation proved so perfectly false that it was never put with his other revelations, or ever printed either. ... Joseph wanted to sell the book in the Cannadian dominion in order to raise money. ... But I have seen and read a copy of it my individual self" (William E. McLellin, Notebook, 21, J. L. Traughber Collection, Marriott Library). For additional sources on the "Canadian Revelation," see VI.A.29, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *OMAHA* (NE) *HERALD,* 10 OCT 1886; VI.A.33,

... But as to the story of John, the Baptist ordaining Joseph and Oliver on the day they were baptized: I never heard of it in the church for years, altho I carefully noticed things that were said. And today I do not believe the story.[9] ... [p. 3]

... Now all L.D.Sism claims that Joseph Smith translated the Book with Urim and Thummim, when he did not even have or retain the Nephite or Jaredite Interpreters, but translated the entire Book of M[ormon]. by means of a small stone. I have certificates to that effect from E[lizabeth]. A[nn]. Cowdery (Oliver's widow,) Martin Harris, and Emma Bidamon.[10] And I have the testimony of John and David Whitmer.[11] The Urim was never on this Continent. ... The Urim was used alone for the purpose of inquiring of God. The Interpreters were used alone for the purpose of interpreting languages. They were not used interchangeably. Now by this we see how all L.D.Saints have been deceived, and believed erroneously in this item.

... But in the spring of 1830 the revelation relative to the Canada mission was certainly untrue. Now if he delivered a word by pretended revela-

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DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 30-31; VI.C.2, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN, 2 FEB 1848; and VI.F.12, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO [JAMES T. COBB?], CIRCA 1881.

9. Both William E. McLellin and David Whitmer reported that they were never told about the angelic priesthood ordinations until years after their conversions. McLellin joined the church in 1831. Elsewhere McLellin repeated: "I never heard of John the Baptist ordaining Joseph and Oliver. I heard not of James, Peter, and John doing so" (William E. McLellin to John L. Traughber, 25 August 1877, *Salt Lake Tribune,* 4 December 1985). Although McLellin heard Smith tell the story of the rise of the church "probably more than twenty times" in the early days of Mormonism, he said, "I never heard of ... John, or Peter, James and John" (*True L[atter]. D[ay]. Saints' Herald* 17 [15 September 1870]: 556). In a notebook McLellin wrote: "In 1831 I heard Joseph tell his experience <~~some twenty times, probably,~~ many times> about angels visits, and about finding the plates, and their contents coming to light but I never heard one word of John the baptist, or of Peter, James, and John's visit and ordination. <Till> It was told some year<s> ~~or two~~ afterward <in Ohio>" (William E. McLellin, Notebook, 10, J. L. Traughber Collection, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah). See also VI.A.24, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ZENAS H. GURLEY, 14 JAN 1885; Vogel 1988, 104-6.

10. See VI.C.3, ELIZABETH ANN WHITMER COWDERY AFFIDAVIT, 15 FEB 1870. The affidavits of Martin Harris and Emma Smith Bidamon taken by McLellin have not been located.

11. If McLellin refers to statements he himself recorded, these are now missing.

tion which was positively false, then I ask you how we can depend upon any of his future predictions. ...

I am most respectfully yours. I am as ever,
W. E. McLellin M.D. ...[12] [p. 4]

12. Postscript deleted.

11.
HISTORY OF SENECA COUNTY (NY), 1876

History of Seneca Co., New York (Philadelphia: Everts, Ensign & Everts, 1876), 34, 129.

About the year 1820, Seneca Falls and Fayette were visited by an odd-looking boy, clad in tow frock and trowsers, and barefooted. He hailed from Palmyra, Wayne County, and made a living by seeking hidden springs. This boy was Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism. ... [p.34] ...

Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, was at one time a resident of this town [Fayette]. Hon. D[aniel]. S. Kendig,[1] who furnished the writer this information, remembers him very well. He [Smith] worked as a day-laborer for old Colonel Jacob Chamberlain,[2] and occasionally for others, when not engaged with his mineral rods digging for gold in various places. He was invariably disappointed, though oftentimes striking with his crowbar an iron chest, supposed to contain the desired gold, when by some mysterious agency it would vanish to some other place.[3] On one occasion he happened to strike the "Golden Bible," as he averred, near Palmyra, Wayne County. This Bible he brought to the house of an honest old Dutch farmer, named [Peter] Whitmer,[4] living in Fayette, about three miles south of Waterloo,

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1. Daniel S. Kendig (1803-?) settled in Waterloo with his parents in 1813. After working as a clerk for eight years in the store of Hoyt & Hunt, Kendig bought out Hunt's stock and, joined by Elijah Quimby, ran the store until 1831. Afterwards Kendig ran several businesses in Waterloo and Seneca Falls (the 1860 census refers to him as a "Warehouse Proprietor") until he retired in 1872. The 1876 *History of Seneca County* states: "He [Kendig] is now residing in Waterloo, on the same lot purchased by him in 1825" (*History of Seneca Co.*, 95; U.S. Census, Waterloo, Seneca County, New York, 1860:288).

2. Jacob Chamberlain is listed as being in his fifties at the time of the 1840 census of Seneca Falls, Seneca County (1840:223). He should not be confused with the younger Jacob P. Chamberlain mentioned in the *History of Seneca Co.*, 120A.

3. On Joseph Smith's possible early contact with Fayette, see VI.E.2, LEE YOST TO DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., 18 MAY 1897; and VI.E.4, HARRISON CHAMBERLAIN REMINISCENCE, 1903. See also Quinn 1998, 51-52.

4. On Peter Whitmer, Sr. (1773-1854), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 59.

and there translated it, and by the aid of one [Oliver] Cowdry,[5] wrote the Mormon Bible, or a portion of it, which was afterwards printed. This was about the year 1829 or 1830. In 1831 he left Fayette, with numerous converts, among whom were the whole Whitmer family and William Jolly.[6] With them also went a family from Junius [Seneca County, New York], named Bennett,[7] and many others. They first stopped at Kirtland, Ohio, and subsequently located at Nauvoo, Illinois. The manner of translating the "Golden Bible" was a novel one. "Joe" Smith would look into a hat and read, and Cowdry would write down as the mysterious characters on the plates were revealed to his understanding.[8] The first baptism in the Mormon faith was made in this town, by immersion in a small brook, called Thomas Creek.[9]

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5. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

6. On William Jolly (1777-1863), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 102.

7. This family remains unidentified.

8. Cf. VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 12.

9. See also VI.E.3, DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., HISTORICAL SKETCH, 1900, 48.

12.
J. L. TRAUGHBER TO [JAMES T. COBB?], CIRCA 1881

John L. Traughber to [James T. Cobb?], circa 1881, in [Wilhelm Ritter von Wymetal], *Joseph Smith, the Prophet, His Family and His Friends* (Salt Lake City: Tribune and Publishing Co., 1886), 311.

EDITORIAL NOTE

German correspondent Wilhelm Ritter von Wymetal (a.k.a. William Wyl) introduced the following excerpt "from a letter from Mr. Traughber." From his home in Tyler, Texas, John L. Traughber (1854-1908), a friend of David Whitmer, wrote to various people in search of information about Mormonism. Wymetal gives neither the date nor the name of the person to whom Traughber addressed his letter, but it is probable that the recipient was James T. Cobb, a Salt Lake City newspaper man who also collected information on Mormon origins. Wymetal had access to Cobb's unpublished correspondence and elsewhere calls him "my learned friend" (p. 75). In a letter to Theodore A. Schroeder, Traughber confirmed that he and Cobb had corresponded: "Mr. Jas. T. Cobb, is my friend, with whom, in the early [18]80s, I had a rather voluminous correspondence" (John L. Traughber to T. A. Schroeder, 24 June 1901, T. A. Schroeder Collection, New York Public Library, New York, New York). In another letter, Traughber mentioned that in one instance Cobb wrote him in 1881 (see John L. Traughber to T. A. Schroeder, 21 August 1901, T. A. Schroeder Collection).

Poor old Martin [Harris][1] intended to pay [for the printing of the Book of Mormon] all the time, but as he would have to sell his farm to do so, he wanted the best price he could get, so he held on and would not sell just as soon as Joe wanted him to.[2] Early in 1830, while matters stood thus, Joe de-

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1. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

2. Although Martin Harris mortgaged his farm on 25 August 1829 as security for the printing (III.L.14, MARTIN HARRIS MORTGAGE, 25 AUG 1829), he was being urged to sell his farm by a revelation of March 1830 (D&C 19:26) and was compelled to do so on 25 February 1831.

livered a whooping *big revelation* directing Oliver Cowdery[3] and Hiram Page[4] to go over into Kingston, Canada, and sell a copyright under that Dominion, and thus get money to pay the printer and let Martin go—be independent of him. The revelation promised them success, and all that sort of stuff. Well, the boys went over on the ice and as they had not money enough to bear their expenses, came back nearly starved, completely wearied, with no money nor copyright sold either.[5] In 1831, when Joe and Sidney[6] were talking about having the revelations published, David Whitmer[7] got up in the council and said all he could against the measure. But Joe raved and declared that the Revelations should be published. David said, "Brother Joseph, are you going to publish *all* of them?" Joe replied, "yes, all, in the order of their dates." Then David asked, "are you going to publish that revelation for Oliver and Hiram [Page] to go to Kingston and get out a copyright for the Book of Mormon?" Joe hung his head a while, then answered, "No." "Why, not, Brother Joseph?" asked honest David. "BECAUSE,["] replied Joe, "IT WAS NOT TRUE."[8] I have this from both Dr. W. E. McLellin[9] [apostle and apostate][10] and David Whitmer, both of whom have read the revela-

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3. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

4. On Hiram Page (1800-52), see introduction to VI.C.1, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM MCLELLIN, 30 MAY 1847.

5. See also VI.F.14, J. L. TRAUGHBER ACCOUNT, NO DATE. For additional sources on the Canadian Revelation, see VI.A.29, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *OMAHA* (NE) *HERALD,* 10 OCT 1886; VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 30-31; VI.C.2, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN, 2 FEB 1848; and VI.F.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO JOSEPH SMITH, III, JUL & SEP 1872. Citing the *Quebec Gazette,* the Lyons (NY) *Countryman* reported that 28 February 1830 was the "coldest day" of the winter, that Kingston had received the heaviest snowfall in several years, and that "lake (Ontario) was frozen, and crossing had become general" (9 March 1830, [2]).

6. On Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), see introduction to I.A.13, SIDNEY RIGDON ACCOUNT, CIRCA 1836.

7. On David Whitmer (1805-88), see "Introduction to David Whitmer Collection."

8. Whitmer claimed the meeting was held in the "spring of 1832" at Hiram, Ohio (Whitmer 1887, 54). The correct date is probably 1 November 1831 when a church conference, which included both Whitmer and McLellin, discussed the printing of the revelations (Cannon and Cook 1983, 26-27).

9. On William E. McLellin (1806-83), see introduction to III.K.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO SAMUEL MCLELLIN, 4 AUG 1832.

10. This bracketed material appears so in the original, probably added by Wymetal.

tion.[11] Dr. McLellin was secretary of the council in which David talked to Joe about it. Dr. McLellin also states that these revelations were twice altered before they were ever printed even in the Book of Commandments and that in the revelations it was frequently said, "Keep these things from the world." These expressions were all expunged or altered in sense.

11. McLellin told Joseph Smith III that he had read the revelation, and he had previously written Traughber that Martin Harris possessed a manuscript copy of it (see VI.F.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO JOSEPH SMITH III, JUL & SEP 1872). Whitmer also mentioned that the revelation was written (see VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 31).

13.
DAVID LEWIS REMINISCENCE, 1908

David Lewis, Reminiscence dictated to Andrew Jenson, 10 September 1908, 1-2, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

EDITORIAL NOTE

David Lewis (1818-?), son of Lemuel Lewis, was born at Saranac, Clinton County, New York. He moved with his parents to Buffalo, New York, about 1826. According to his account, he was present at the church's organization, which he claimed took place in Fayette, New York,[1] and was baptized by Joseph Smith on 5 May 1830. After moving to Kirtland, Ohio, he was sent on a mission to the east with Henry Jacobs about 1832. After his return to Kirtland in 1834, little is known about him. He may have been the David Lewis called on a mission to Lexington, Kentucky, in April 1843 (Backman 1983, 44; J. Smith 1948, 5:348).

His reminiscence was dictated to Andrew Jenson,[2] then assistant church historian, and others at the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City on 10 September 1908. Lewis's statement was apparently intended to be included in the second volume of Jenson's *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (1914). A note written sideways in the left-hand margin, apparently in Jenson's hand, points to the reason for its exclusion: "This statement was afterwards proven to be untrue / Andrew Jenson." Lewis's statement is a four-page typed document with handwritten corrections on the first page.

Historian's office September 10, 1908 <Testimony taken in the presence of Andrew Jenson, Hiram B. Clawson, Martin L. Lindsay Jr., Stocky Anderson and M. Minerva Jenson.>

My name is David Lewis. I am the son of Lemuel[3] and Weighty

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1. Regarding Lewis's claim that the church was organized in Fayette, New York, see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 82.

2. On Andrew Jenson (1850-1941), see VI.C.4, JOHN C. WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW JENSON AND EDWARD STEVENSON, 11 OCT 1888, n. 1.

3. Perhaps the same Lemuel Lewis, between twenty-six and forty-five years of age, listed in the 1820 census of Batavia, Genesee County, New York (1820:24).

<Lewis> Selecta (Stanton) Lewis, <and> I was born at Saranac, Clinton county, New York. May 5, ~~1818~~. <1831> <(1818 no[t] when)>

The first time I ever saw the Prophet Joseph he was speak=ing concerning his mission; that was two years before the orgini=zation of the Church. ~~"He said I came to die for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints".~~ He lived <at that town in Fayette N.Y.> at the place where the Church was organized. I never lived in Pennsylvania, but passed through there while on my mission with Bro. <Henry C.> Jacobs.[4] I lived <with my parents> 4 miles from where the Church was organized. <When I> I was 8 years old ~~when~~ <my> father <had> left Clinton county <and located in western New York>. ~~He went to the city of Buffalo to within 4 miles of where the church was organized.~~ <I was at the meeting where the Church was organized, April 6, 1830.> When I went to meeting to be baptized <about a month after the Church was organized I remember> I had two miles to go down the road and two miles to go <fallow [follow] a low trail through low lands.>

~~The nature of the country for travel was partly trailed and the trail turned off~~

My recollection is that I was baptized in a small stream. The Prophet baptized me. I don't remember where the town of Colesville was, nor Waterloo.[5] The size of the house where the church was organized was, I should judge, about 14 by 16 [feet]. It had no floor except dirt. The village was a very small one, just a little place; I think it was on level ground. <">Do you remember hearing of Fayette?<"> <was propounded by one of the brethren> Yes<,> sir, thats the place I was trying to think of, thats where the Church was first organized. The question was here asked<,> "David are you tired?"[6] He replied, "No<,> I never ~~getting~~ <get> tired of talking about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints<,"> ~~in my life".~~ It seems to me that at the organization of the church Joseph first laid his hands upon Oliver Cowdery[7] and ordained him, and then Oliver ordained Joseph. How I came to be present at the organization of the church was, I had spoken to Joseph,

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4. Perhaps the Henry C. Jacobs called on a mission to western New York in April 1843 (J. Smith 1948, 5:348).

5. Lewis was evidently asked by someone present if he knew where the towns of Colesville and Waterloo were, perhaps in an effort to help him remember the location of his baptism.

6. It should be noted that Lewis was seventy-seven years old, if born in 1831, and ninety years old if born in 1818 (see first paragraph of his statement).

7. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

about a week before that about being baptized. Joseph told me to ask my father and mother and if possible get their consent. I went home and asked my mother, if she was willing that I join the Church. She answered, "What Church," I said, "Joseph's church." She said, "Yes<,> David<,> you can do so<,> if you please, but David the whole world is against them, including all the good ministers." I said, "I like the way Joseph speaks, he preaches baptism for the remission of sins, the laying [p. 1] on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, etc". I just went up there to see Joseph: I used to often go over to see Joseph I cannot tell what Joseph was doing at the time of the organization of the church, excepting that he was engaged in general church work and translating the book of Mormon.[8] He always wore a white shirt with a ruffle on the breast about 2 inches wide. <Just> Before entering the house in which the church was organized I heard Joseph say "Come let us organize the church.["] He laid his hands upon the head of everybody present and confirmed them members of the church. There were present at the meeting besides myself Joseph and Hyrum Smith[,] Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, Peter Whitmer jun., and Samuel H. Smith.[9] The Sacrament was administered upon that occasion for the first time. I attended meeting regularly every Sunday at that place until we moved to Kirtland. I was baptized on my 12th birthday which was May 5, 1830 just 29 days after the organization of the church.[10] Before leaving home ~~to go to the meeting called for the organization of the church~~ <for the purpose of being baptized>[,] I promised my mother that I would come right ~~home as soon as the meeting let out~~ <ceremony was performed>. After the ~~meeting~~ <ceremony> there was quite a severe thunder storm, and Joseph asked me to remain <under shelter> until the storm had passed. I told him of the promise I had made to my mother. Joseph said you better stay till the rain is over[.] I said ["]I have to go Joseph and I must go to keep my promise to my mother." Joseph then shooke hands with me and asked the Lord to bless me, and he promised me that the Lord would be with me, and would take me safely home to my mother. On the way home I ran up against a big elm tree I was frigh=tened and thought I was lost. I cried in my freight [fright], but soon I thought of the Prophet's words, that the Lord would guide me home in safety to my mother. I thereupon knelt down and asked the Lord to take me safely to my home and to be a lamp to my feet and a guide to my pathway. Suddenly a

8. By 6 April 1830, the Book of Mormon had already been translated and published.

9. Regarding those present at the organization, see introduction to IV.A.4, JOSEPH KNIGHT, JR., STATEMENT, 11 AUG 1862.

10. Joseph Smith's location on 5 May 1830 is uncertain.

light appeared which resembled the light of a coaloil lamp. I started for home and the light went ahead of me directly on the path where I walked. This light kept moving before me until I reached my home. My mother who was looking out for me saw it also and it lit up her window with its rays. It went around the back door of the house and stop[p]ed there. My mother opened the door and just as soon as the door was opened the light went out. I afterwards told Joseph about the light guiding me home. He said "David I knew that you would get lost in the woods and that the Lord would guide you home. When we left Fayette we went with the body of the church to Kirtland. ...

14.
J. L. TRAUGHBER ACCOUNT, NO DATE

John L. Traughber, Notes, "False Prophecies," 1-2, undated, J. L. Traughber Collection, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

EDITORIAL NOTE

See also VI.F.12, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO [JAMES T. COBB?], CIRCA 1881.

Revelation on the Copyright.

Dr. William E. McLellan, who was one of the original Mormon "Twelve," has stated to me time and again that he saw and read a long revelation which Joseph Smith delivered to Oliver Cowdery and Hiram Page to go to Kingston, Canada and get out a copyright for the Book of Mormon under that dominion, and sell it for the purpose of paying E. B. Grandin of Palmyra, New York, for printing the first edition of the Book of Mormon. Dr. McLellan stated emphatically that the revelation promised complete success to Cowdery and Page in their mission to Canada. In September, 1879, I closely questioned David Whitmer as to the facts concerning the revelation on the copyright. He stated that it was delivered in January, 1830, and that Cowdery and Page crossed the lake on the ice and went to Kingston, and did just as the revelation required them to do; but they completely failed in their endeavor to get a copyright. David Whitmer also stated that Cowdery and Page had little or no money with them, and came back to New York almost starved. Dr. McLellan stated that this revelation was so palpably false that Joseph Smith would never have it printed. This was confirmed by David Whitmer, who said that when the council was called, November 1st, 1831, to deliberate on the printing of the revelations, he for one opposed printing them, as it had been taught to them before, that revelations to individuals were private property, and that revelations to the church were church property and should be kept from the world; but Rigdon got up and said that the revelations must be printed, and the [-][1] was just famishing for them and must have them; to all of which Smith [-] David Whitmer said he arose and asked Smith if he would have all the [revel]ations printed. Smith said, "Yes, all of

1. The brackets here and elsewhere are due to a lacuna in the manuscript.

them." "Will you have that one you [ga]ve to Oliver and Hiram to go to Kingston, and get a copyright printed, too?" asked David. "No," answered Smith. "Why will you not have that printed, brother Joseph?" inquired David. Smith hung his head, and with reluctance answered, "Because it was false."

... I can give the names of several persons, who are living, that were present, and heard David Whitmer make the statements I have given. I have no doubt they will all remember what he said, and I have as little doubt but they will confirm what I have written. The time to which I refer was September 2, 1879. The place was the office of Whitmer's livery stable, Richmond, Mo. The persons present were David Whitmer, Sr., David Whitmer, Jr., George W. L. Schweich, John C. Whitmer and W. W. Warriner of Richmond, J. J. Cranmer of Hannibal, Mo., and myself. ...

Dr. McLellan states that the written copy of the revelation on the copyright, that he read, was in the possession of Martin Harris. ...

G.
Miscellaneous
DOCUMENTS

1.
TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES, JUNE 1829

The Book of Mormon, Printer's Manuscript, 463, 464, Restoration Scriptures, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

EDITORIAL NOTE

The printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon is the earliest known copy of the Testimony of Three Witnesses, the original document apparently not having survived. The copy, including the names of the witnesses, is in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery, apparently, although the original testimony was signed by each witness. In an 1878 interview, David Whitmer was asked by Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith if all the witnesses signed the testimonies themselves, to which Whitmer replied, "each signed his own name" (see VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878; see also Joseph F. Smith to Samuel Russell, 19 March 1901, Russell Collection, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah, cited in Cook 1991, 258-59). The language of the document draws from the title page of the Book of Mormon as well as from the revelations that preceded it (D&C 5, 14, 17).

When Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris accompanied Joseph Smith into the woods near the Peter Whitmer, Sr., farm in Fayette, New York, in June 1829, it was in fulfillment of a promise given them by revelation (D&C 17) that they would see the golden plates. This revelation stipulated that "it is by your faith that you shall obtain a view of them" (17:2). The four men made a concerted but unsuccessful effort to exercise enough faith to see the plates. Harris then withdrew from the group, believing that he was the cause of their failure. In his absence, as the three remaining men later testified, an angel appeared and showed them the golden record. After this vision closed, Smith joined Harris, who was praying some distance away, and together they experienced the same vision (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 24-25).

These three men thereby became special witnesses not only to the Book of Mormon but also to Joseph Smith's revelatory claims. Lucy Smith recalled her son's relief when the four returned to the Whitmer residence: "Father!—Mother!—said he you do not know how happy I am[.] The Lord has caused the plates to be shown to 3 more besides me who have also seen an

angel and will have to testify to the truth of what I have said for they know for themselves that I do not go about to deceive the people and I do feel as though I was relieved of a dreadful burden which was almost too much for me to endure but they will now have to bear a part and it does rejoice my soul that I am not any longer to be entirely alone in the world" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:101).

Lucy also described the effect of the experience on the other men: "Martin Harris then came in he seemed almost overcome with excess of joy[.] He then testified to what he had seen and heard as did also the others Oliver and David ... their testimony was the same <in substance as that> contained in the book of Mormon" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:101).

Prior to their excommunications in 1838, the three witnesses often repeated their testimonies in public. Ezra Booth, for instance, reported in 1831 that the three men "frequently testify, in the presence of large congregations" (VI.F.3, EZRA BOOTH ACCOUNT, 1831, 184). In a late reminiscence, Edward Stevenson related an instance that occurred in 1834 in Pontiac, Michigan, in which the three men each bore testimony and described the vision:

> Oliver, David, and Martin each related at various meetings the vision as they beheld it, each time being deeply inspired, and they spoke as no man could speak only as they who had stood in the presence of an heavenly messenger. They said that they were in the presence of an angel who talked with them ... and [who] also showed them the plates containing the characters as engraved upon them, stating that the translation of them as found in the Book of Mormon was correct, and that the translation was given by the power of God, and not by the wisdom of man. He [the angel] also shewed them the Urim and Thummim, which was used by the ancient prophets for the purpose of translating, and was a gift of God to His chosen people. They further said that the voice of the Lord commanded them, as witnesses, to be faithful to the trust reposed in them, and that their testimony should be had in remembrance and should go forth unto the convincing of the honest in heart in all nations, and no power should stop the progress of the work of God (*Millennial Star* 48 [31 May 1886]: 341-42).

The published testimony of the three witnesses is deceptively simple. For instance, the collective statement declares that "an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon" but fails to mention that Harris's vision was separate from that of Whitmer and Cowdery. Further, despite the apparent claim in the testimony that the plates were seen with "our eyes,"

Harris and Whitmer repeatedly admitted the internal, subjective nature of their visionary experiences. Therefore, the elusive testimony of the three witnesses should be read with caution in the context of the various interviews with and statements by the individual witnesses.

The testimony of three witnesses

Be it known unto ~~every~~ <all> nations[,] kindreds[,] tongues & people unto whom this work shall come that we through the grace of God the Father & our Lord Jesus Christ have seen the plates which contain this record which is a record of the people of Nephi & also of the Lamanites his brethren & also of the people of Jared which came from the tower of which hath been spoken & we also know that they have been translated by the gift & power of God for his voice hath declared it unto us wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true & we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates & they have been shewn unto us by the power of God & not of man & we declare with words of soberness that an angel of God came down from Heaven & he brought & laid before our eyes that we beheld & saw the plates & the engravings thereon & we know that it is by the grace of God the Father & our Lord Jesus Christ that we beheld & bear record that these things are true & it is marvellous in our eyes nevertheless the voice of the Lord com=manded us that we should bear record of it Wherefore to be obediant unto the com=mandments of God we bear testimony of these things & we know that if we are fa=ithful in Christ we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men & be found spotless before the Judgement seat of Christ & shall dwell with him Eternally in the Heavens & the honor be to the Father & to the Son & to the Holy Ghost which is one God. Amen.

Oliver Cowdery
David Whitmer
Martin Harris

2.
FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUNE 1830, 26 SEPTEMBER 1830 & 2 JANUARY 1831

"The Conference Minutes, and Record Book, of Christ's Church of Latter Day Saints Belonging to the High Council of said Church, or their successors in office, of Caldwell County Missouri; Far West: April 6, 1838," 1-2, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

EDITORIAL NOTE

The early church was instructed by revelation: "Behold, there shall be a record kept among you" (D&C 21:1). Minutes of meetings and conferences were kept on loose sheets which were later copied into the "Far West Record." The ledger does not contain the original minutes in the handwriting of the clerks whose names appear on the document, but rather, copies of the minutes as reentered by Ebenezer Robinson and Hosea Stout. The first half of the document (9 June 1830-7 December 1837) was copied by Robinson sometime between 6 April 1838 and 1 October 1842 and the remainder (23 December 1837-15 June 1844) was copied by Stout at some point thereafter (see Cannon and Cook 1983, 134, n. 1). It is because most of the material in the ledger deals with the Missouri period, and because the ledger was used by the high council at Far West for their own minutes in 1838, that it came to be known as the "Far West Record" (see ibid., xi-xv).

[*9 June 1830*]

Mi<n>utes of the first Conference held in the Township of Fayette, Seneca County, State of New York,[1] by the Elders of this Church, June 9th 1830, according to the Church Articles and Covenants[2]

Elders Present[3]:

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1. See also I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 41-42.
2. D&C 20:61-62.
3. It is uncertain when these individuals, besides Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, were ordained elders. David Whitmer claimed he was ordained to this office in June 1829 (VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 32).

Joseph Smith, <junior>[4]	David Whitmer,[5]
Oliver Cowdery,[6]	John Whitmer,[7]
Peter Whitmer,[8]	Ziba Peterson[9]

Ezekiel 14th read by br Joseph Smith jr. and prayer by the same[.] Articles and Covenants[10] read by Joseph Smith jr. and recieved by unanim=ous voice of the whole congregation, which consisted of most of the male members of the Church. Samuel H. Smith[11] was then ordained an Elder under the hand of Oliver Cowdery; & Joseph Smith seignior and Hyrum Smith[12] were ordained Priests.

The following persons were then seated respectively & received their licences,[13] Viz:

Elders of this Church.	Priests of this Church.
David Whitmer	Martin Harris[14]
John Whitmer	Hyrum Smith

4. "Junior" is written in lighter ink.

5. On David Whitmer (1805-88), see "Introduction to David Whitmer Collection."

6. On Oliver Cowdery (1806-50), see "Introduction to Oliver Cowdery Collection."

7. On John Whitmer (1802-78), see "Introduction to John Whitmer Collection."

8. On Peter Whitmer, Jr. (1809-36), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 63.

9. On Richard Ziba Peterson (?-1849), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 105.

10. The reading of the "Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ," Doctrine and Covenants 20, became a routine practice at early church conferences (see Cannon and Cook 1983, 2, n. 5; Cook 1981, 31). Section 22 of the Doctrine and Covenants was not originally considered part of the "Articles and Covenants," as Lyndon W. Cook has asserted (1981, 33).

11. On Samuel Harrison Smith (1808-44), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 13.

12. On Hyrum Smith (1800-44), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 12.

13. Of the licenses issued at this conference, three have survived (see VI.G.4, CHRISTIAN WHITMER TEACHER'S LICENSE, 9 JUN 1830; VI.G.3, JOSEPH SMITH, SR., PRIEST'S LICENSE, 9 JUN 1830; and VI.G.5, JOHN WHITMER ELDER'S LICENSE, 9 JUN 1830).

14. On Martin Harris (1783-1875), see "Introduction to Martin Harris Collection."

Peter Whitmer
Ziba Peterson
Samuel H. Smith

Joseph Smith sen[15]

Teachers of this Church

Hiram Page[16] and
Christian Whitmer.[17]

Exhortation[18] by Joseph Smith jr. and Oliver Cowdery, conference adjourned to the 26th September 1830, to be held in the same place. Br. Oliver Cowdery appointed to keep the Church record and Conference minutes until the next conference.[19] Prayer by all the Brethren present and dismissed by Br. Oliver Cowdery. The above minutes were taken at the time of this conference by Oliver Cowdery. Clerk. [p. 1]

[*26 September 1830*]

Minutes of the second Conference held by the Elders of this Church according to adjournment, Sept. 26. 1830.[20]

Elders

Joseph Smith jr.
Oliver Cowdery
David Whitmer
John Whitmer
Peter Whitmer

Br. Joseph Smith jr.
appointed leader of

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15. On Joseph Smith, Sr. (1771-1840), see "Introduction to Joseph Smith, Sr., Collection."

16. On Hiram Page (1800-52), see introduction to VI.C.1, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM MCLELLIN, 30 MAY 1847.

17. On Christian Whitmer (1798-1835), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 96.

18. Concerning the "exhortation," Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook have commented: "The word *exhortation* is used frequently in the Far West Record. In the early nineteenth century, exhortation meant a discourse designed to encourage or admonish earnestly. The word is not presently in colloquial usage" (Cannon and Cook 1983, 2, n. 7). This form of sermonizing was familiar to Joseph Smith who, as Orsamus Turner claimed, "was a very passable exhorter in evening meetings" of the Methodists (III.J.2, ORSAMUS TURNER ACCOUNT, 1851, 214). Cf. Moroni's final exhortation in Moro. 10.

19. Cf. D&C 21:1.

20. This three-day conference was held at the Peter Whitmer, Sr., residence in Fayette, New York, 26-28 September 1830 (see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 53-58).

Samuel H. Smith
Thomas B. Marsh.[21]

the Conference by
vote.[22]

Brother Joseph Smith jr. was appointed by the voice of the Conference to receive and write Revelations & Command=ments for this Church.[23]

The fifth chapter of Isaiah read by Br. Joseph Smith jr. & prayer by the same. Articles & Covenants read by br. Oliver Cowdery and remarks by Brother Joseph Smith jr.

No. [number] of the several members uniting to this Church since the last Conference, thirty-five, making in whole now belonging to this Church sixty-two.[24] Br. Newel Knight[25] ordained a priest under the hand of brother Oliver Cowdery and prayer by the same. Prayer by all present. Exhortation by all the Elders respectively. Singing and prayer in behalf of Br. Oliver Cowdery & Peter Whitmer jr. who were previously appointed to go to the Lamanites.[26]

Conference adjourned to January 1. 1831. to be held at this place.[27] Br. David Whitmer appointed to keep the Church records until the next Conference. Prayer by br. Oliver Cowdery. The foregoing minutes were taken at the time of this Conference by Oliver Cowdery.

[*2 January 1831*][28]

Conference convened according to adjournment but there were no minutes taken, save a commandment received, giving directions to the Saints, see Book of Commandments, page 80 [D&C 38].[29] [p. 2]

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21. On Thomas B. Marsh (1799-1866), see introduction to III.K.22, THOMAS B. MARSH AUTOBIOGRAPHY, 1857.

22. The principle of common consent had been established the previous July (D&C 26).

23. As set forth in D&C 21 and 28.

24. From this statement, it would follow that there were twenty-seven members as of 9 June 1830.

25. On Newel Knight (1800-47), see introduction to IV.A.2, NEWEL KNIGHT JOURNAL, CIRCA 1846.

26. See D&C 28 and 30.

27. This conference would actually be held on 2 January 1831.

28. There are no minutes of this conference. What follows is a brief note written on the bottom of page 2 by one of the recorders.

29. The conference was held in the Peter Whitmer, Sr., home in Fayette, New York. During the conference, Joseph Smith received a revelation instructing the church to move to Ohio (D&C 38; see also I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 88-90; and VI.B.1, JOHN WHITMER HISTORY, 1831, 5).

3.
JOSEPH SMITH, SR., PRIEST'S LICENSE, 9 JUNE 1830

Joseph Smith, Sr., Priest's License, 9 June 1830, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Joseph Smith, Sr., was baptized by Oliver Cowdery on 6 April 1830, but received no priesthood ordination until the first church conference on 9 June in Fayette. The record of the meeting states: "Samuel H. Smith was then ordained an Elder under the hand of Oliver Cowdery, & Joseph Smith seignior and Hyrum Smith were ordained Priests" (VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830 & 2 JAN 1831, under 9 June 1830). The priest's duty, as outlined in the "Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ," "is to preach, teach, expound, exhort and baptize, and administer the sacrament, and visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties. And he may also ordain other priests, teachers, and deacons. And he is to take the lead of meetings when there is no elder present. ... In all these duties the priest is to assist the elder if occasion requires" (D&C 20:46-49, 52).

Also at the 9 June conference, the various priesthood holders were for the first time issued licenses. The "Articles and Covenants" stipulated that "the elders are to receive their licenses from other elders, by vote of the church to which they belong, or from the conferences. Each priest, teacher, or deacon, who is ordained by a priest, may take a certificate from him at the time, which certificate, when presented to an elder, shall entitle him to a license, which shall authorize him to perform the duties of his calling, or he may receive it from a conference" (D&C 20:63-64).

Very few of the original licenses have survived. Joseph Smith, Sr.'s, written in Oliver Cowdery's hand, is preserved in the LDS Church Archives. A notation on the reverse side gives a clue about its provenance: "Rec[eive]d from cousin / Elias A. Smith / Oct. 8, 1902 / J[oseph]. F. Smith." Elias A. Smith (1857-?) was the son of Elias Smith (1804-88), who was the son of Asael Smith, Jr. (1773-1848), brother of Joseph Smith, Sr. (see Jenson 1971, 1:719-22, 776, 4:61; Lucy Smith 1853, 41).

JOSEPH SMITH, JR., PRIEST'S LICENSE, 1830

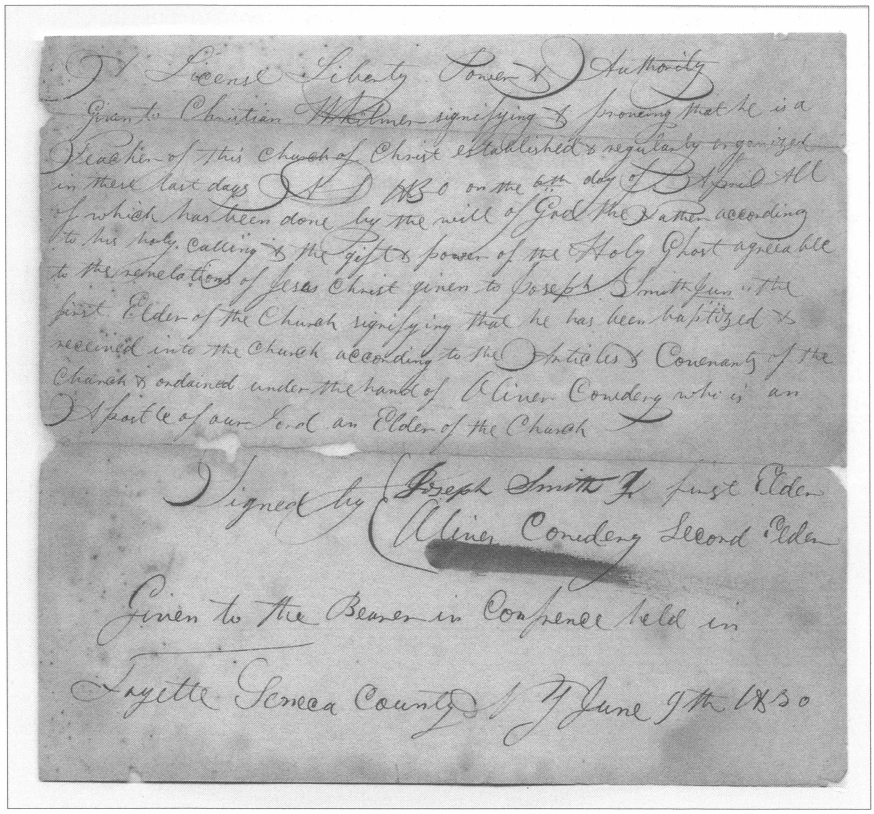
A License Liberty Power & Authority

Given to Joseph Smith sen. signifying & proveing that he is a Priest of this Church of Christ established & regularly organized in these last days, A.D. 1830 on the 6th day of April[.] All of which has been done by the will of God the Father accor=ding to his holy calling & the gifts & power of the Holy Ghost agreea=ble to the revelations of Jesus Christ given to Joseph Smith Jun. the first Elder of the Church signifying that he has been baptised & received into the Church according to the Articles & Covenants of the Church & ordained under the hand of Oliver Cowdery who is an Apostle of our Lord an Elder of the Church

Signed by | [s] Joseph Smith Jr. first Elder

[s] Oliver Cowdery second Elder

Given to the Bearer in Conference held in Fayette Seneca County NY June 9th 1830.



License Liberty Power & Authority
Given to Christian Whitmer signifying & proveing that he is a
Teacher of this Church of Christ established & regularly organized
in these last days A.D. 1830 on the 6th day of April All
of which has been done by the will of God the Father according
to his holy Calling & the gift & power of the Holy Ghost agreeable
to the revelations of Jesus Christ given to Joseph Smith Jun. the
first Elder of the Church signifying that he has been baptized &
received into the Church according to the Articles & Covenants of the
Church & ordained under the hands of Oliver Cowdery who is an
Apostle of our Lord an Elder of the Church

Signed by Joseph Smith Jr. first Elder
Oliver Cowdery Second Elder

Given to the Bearer in Conference held in
Fayette Seneca County N.Y. June 9th 1830

Christian Whitmer's Teacher's License, 9 June 1830. Courtesy Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

4.
CHRISTIAN WHITMER TEACHER'S LICENSE, 9 JUNE 1830

Christian Whitmer Teacher's License, 9 June 1830, William Robertson Coe Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Christian Whitmer was evidently ordained to the office of teacher prior to the conference of 9 June 1830 but did not receive his license until that time (VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830 & 2 JAN 1831, under 9 June 1830). According to the "Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ": "The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them; and see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking; and see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty. And he is to take the lead of meetings in the absence of the elder or priest—And is to be assisted always, in all his duties in the church, by the deacons, if occasion requires. But neither teachers nor deacons have authority to baptize, administer the sacrament, or lay on hands; they are, however, to warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ" (D&C 20:53-59).

I. Woodbridge Riley, who published a partial transcription of Christian Whitmer's teacher's license, indicates that in 1902-1903 the original document was in possession of William Evarts Benjamin of New York City (Riley 1903, 80). Benjamin, a rare book dealer, evidently had temporary possession of some Whitmer family papers then under the control of George W. Schweich, grandson of David Whitmer (see Joseph F. Smith to Samuel Russell, 19 March 1901, Russell Collection, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah; cf. Cook 1991, 257). On 18 April 1903, the RLDS Church purchased the Whitmer documents from Schweich (McKiernan and Launius 1980, 23), but the teacher's license was apparently not among them. At least, the RLDS (now Community of Christ) Library-Archives has no record of having had it. A decade ago I searched for it among Benjamin's papers at Columbia University. Recently, researchers from Brigham Young University and LDS Church Archives located it among previously uncatalogued acquisitions at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at

Yale University where curators feel certain that it was acquired sometime between 1940-70.

A Licence Liberty Power & Authority

Given to Christian Whitmer signifying & proveing that he is a Teacher of this Church of Christ established & regularly organized in these last days A.D. 1830 on the 6th day of April[.] All of which has been done by the will of God the Father according to his holy calling & the gift & power of the Holy Ghost agreeable to the revelations of Jesus Christ given to Joseph Smith Jun the first Elder of the Church signifying that he has been baptized & received into the Church according to the Articles & Covenants of the Church & ordained under the hand of Oliver Cowdery who is an Apostle of our Lord an Elder of the Church

Signed by | [s] Joseph Smith Jr first Elder

[s] Oliver Cowdery Second Elder

Given to the Bearer in Conference held in Fayette Seneca County NY June 9th 1830

5.
JOHN WHITMER ELDER'S LICENSE, 9 JUNE 1830

John Whitmer Elder's License, 9 June 1830, William Robertson Coe Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

EDITORIAL NOTE

John Whitmer was evidently ordained to the office of elder prior to the church conference held on 9 June 1830, at Fayette, New York, and received his license at the conference (VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830 & 2 JAN 1831, under 9 June 1830). The license is in Oliver Cowdery's hand. In the early days of the church, the apostleship was closely associated with the office of elder. According to the "Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ": "An apostle is an elder, and it is his calling to baptize and to ordain other elders, priests, teachers and deacons, and to administer the flesh and blood of Christ, according to the scriptures; and to teach, expound, exhort, baptize, and watch over the church; and to confirm the church by the laying on of the hands, and the giving of the Holy Ghost, and to take the lead of all meetings. The elders are to conduct the meetings as they are led by the Holy Ghost" (Book of Commandments 24:32-35; cf. D&C 20:38-45).

A Licence Liberty Power & Authority

Given to John Whitmer signifying & proveing that he is an ~~Apostle of Jesus Christ~~ an Elder of this Church of Christ estab=lished & regularly organized in these last days A.D. 1830 on the 6th day of April[.] All of which has been done by the will of God the Father according to his holy calling & the gift & power of the Holy Ghost agreeable to the revelations of Jesus Christ given to Joseph Smith Jun the first Elder of the Church Signifying that he has been baptized & received into the Church according to the Articles & Covenants of the Church & ordained under the hand of Joseph Smith Jun who is an Apostle of our Lord

Signed by

[s] Joseph Smith Jr first Elder

[s] Oliver Cowdery second Elder

Given to the Bearer in Conference held in Fayette Seneca County NY June 9th 1830

6.
EDWARD PARTRIDGE ELDER'S LICENSE, 15 DECEMBER 1830

Edward Partridge Elder's License, 15 December 1830, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

EDITORIAL NOTE

While Sidney Rigdon was baptized and ordained an elder by Oliver Cowdery in early November 1830 in Ohio, Edward Partridge[1] deferred his baptism and ordination until meeting Joseph Smith in Fayette, New York, the following month. Rigdon and Partridge arrived together in Fayette on or about 7 December 1830, and Partridge was soon baptized and ordained an elder (see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 78-80; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:Frag. 9, 1853:170; Cook 1981, 53). The transcription of Partridge's elder's license below is from the original, given to church historians sometime after it was published by Orson F. Whitney in the *Contributor* magazine (see Orson F. Whitney, "Aaronic Priesthood," *Contributor* 6 [October 1884[:5). Whitney reports that the license was "[p]reserved by the Partridge family as a relic." As early as 1878 it was copied by Edward Partridge, Jr., into his father's journal ("Journal of B[isho]p Edward Partridge," compiled by Edward Partridge, Jr., LDS Church Archives). Unlike other licenses from the 9 June 1830 conference, Partridge's is in the hand of Sidney Rigdon, not that of Oliver Cowdery, nor does it follow Cowdery's formulaic wording. On the reverse is written "Elder's license."

This may certify that Edward Partridge has been received into this church of Christ ~~formed~~ which was orga=nized on the 6th of April AD 1830 and ordained as an Elder under my hand[.]

Senaca County[,] New York[.]

[s] Sidney Rigdon

Dated Fayette this 15th day of December AD 1830

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1. On Edward Partridge (1793-1840), see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, note 193.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: EARLY CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN NEW YORK

At the time of its organization on 6 April 1830, according to Joseph Smith's 1838 history, there were six members in the church. By the time of the exodus from New York in the early spring of 1831, there were over a hundred members. This appendix attempts to reconstruct the church membership in New York during the first year of its organization.

The first fixed number that may be useful in reconstructing the membership comes from the statement that there were six members at the time of the church's organization (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 37). Actually, the history draft indicates that the compilers contemplated "about 30" (DRAFT:9), evidently confusing the 6 April 1830 organization in Manchester, New York, with the 9 June conference in Fayette. Having discovered their error, they substituted "six," apparently from the number of baptisms previously described in the history. Those first six baptisms were:

Harmony, Pennsylvania, 15 May 1829[1]

1. Oliver Cowdery
2. Joseph Smith

Harmony, Pennsylvania, 25 May 1829[2]

3. Samuel H. Smith

Fayette, New York, early June 1829[3]

4. Hyrum Smith
5. David Whitmer
6. Peter Whitmer, Jr.

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1. I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 17-18; III.G.6, OLIVER COWDERY to W. W. PHELPS, 7 SEP 1834, 15-16.

2. I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 19.

3. Joseph Smith baptized Hyrum Smith and David Whitmer, and Oliver Cowdery baptized Peter Whitmer, Jr., in Seneca Lake (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 23).

The next fixed number referred to in the early records is linked to the 9 June conference in Fayette. According to the minutes of the 26-28 September conference, "[the] No. [number] of the several members uniting to this Church since the last Conference, thirty-five, making in whole now belonging to this Church sixty-two" (VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830 & 2 JAN 1831). It would follow that there were twenty-seven members as of 9 June. Smith's history names all but three of these members, as follows:

Manchester, New York, 6 April 1830[4]

7. Martin Harris[5]
8. Joseph Smith, Sr.

Manchester, New York, 8 or 9 April 1830[6]

9. Lucy Smith
10. Sarah (Witt) Rockwell

Fayette, New York, 11 April 1830[7]

11. Hiram Page

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4. Regarding the church's organization in Manchester, New York, see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 82.

5. Martin Harris said that he was the first person baptized after Joseph Smith, Jr., and Oliver Cowdery (III.F.15, MARTIN HARRIS TESTIMONY, 4 SEP 1870). While not entirely correct, it nevertheless seems that he was the first baptized on 6 April.

6. In dating the baptisms of Lucy Smith and Sarah Rockwell, I have departed from the traditional dating of 6 April 1830 for the following reasons: the Joseph Smith history draft includes a note at the bottom of pages 9 and 10 which reads: "Father Smith[,] Martin Harris baptized this evening 6th April. [p. 9] Mother Smith & Sister [Sarah] Rockwell 2 or 3 days afterward [p. 10]" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 89). This seems to be supported by the fact that Joseph Knight, who was present for the 6 April baptisms of Joseph Sr. and Martin Harris, did not mention Lucy and Sarah (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 7); Martin Harris recounted his and Joseph Sr.'s baptisms without mentioning the two women (III.F.15, MARTIN HARRIS TESTIMONY, 4 SEP 1870); and John Stafford said he saw Lucy's and Sarah's baptisms but did not mention Joseph Sr. or Martin Harris (*Shortsville Enterprise,* 18 March 1904; see introduction to III.B.11, JOHN STAFFORD INTERVIEW, 1881).

7. Joseph Smith's history lists six people baptized by Oliver Cowdery in Seneca Lake on 11 April 1830 (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839,

12. Catherine (Whitmer) Page
13. Christian Whitmer
14. Anne (Schott) Whitmer
15. Jacob Whitmer
16. Elizabeth (Schott) Whitmer

Fayette, New York, 18 April 1830[8]

17. Peter Whitmer, Sr.
18. Mary (Musselman) Whitmer
19. William Jolly
20. Elizabeth Jolly
21. Vincent Jolly
22. Richard B. (Ziba) Peterson
23. Elizabeth Ann Whitmer

Fayette, New York, May 1830 (last week)[9]

24. Newel Knight

Three people remain to be identified to reach the twenty-seven mentioned in connection with the 9 June conference. The three most likely candidates are:

Fayette, New York, Early June 1829

25. John Whitmer[10]

Fayette, New York, Circa April 1830

26. Solomon Chamberlain[11]

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39). The history draft includes a Mary Page (DRAFT:11), but the identity of this person remains unknown (Jessee 1989, 503).

8. Joseph Smith's history lists seven people baptized by Oliver Cowdery in Seneca Lake on 18 April 1830 (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 39; see also VI.E.3, DIEDRICH WILLERS, JR., HISTORICAL SKETCH, 1900, 48 [minus Ziba Peterson]).

9. Newel Knight visited Joseph Smith in Fayette during the last week of May 1830 and was baptized by David Whitmer (see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 41; IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 50).

10. John Whitmer's baptism is thought to have occurred after a revelation was received for him, D&C 15, and at the same time his brothers David and Peter were baptized (see Cook 1981, 25).

11. Probably in April 1830 ("soon after" the church was organized) by

27. Hope (Haskins) Chamberlain

It is unknown how the early church kept track of its membership, so it remains possible that others were baptized in early 1830. Indeed, some may have joined and fallen away before the first conference, leaving no record of their brief affiliation. A short historical sketch published in the April 1833 issue of *The Evening and The Morning Star* states: "Twenty more were added to the church in Manchester and Fayette, in the month of April [1830]" (III.I.5, WILLIAM W. PHELPS ACCOUNT, 1833). This apparently was meant to suggest twenty baptisms besides the six performed prior to the organization of the church. Indeed, the current reconstruction has seven baptisms before 6 April, nineteen before the end of April, and one during the last week of May.

The third fixed number comes from the minutes of the 26-28 September 1830 church conference which noted a total membership of sixty-two adherents (VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830 & 2 JAN 1831). Joseph Smith's history names all but nine of the converts added to the church between 9 June and 26 September 1830, as follows:

Fayette, New York, 9 June 1830[12]

28. John Poorman
29. John Jolly
30. Julia Ann Jolly
31. Harriet Jolly
32. Jerusha (Barden) Smith
33. Katharine Smith[13]
34. William Smith
35. Don Carlos Smith

Joseph Smith in Seneca Lake (see III.J.1, SOLOMON CHAMBERLAIN ACCOUNTS, 1845 & CIRCA 1858). Larry C. Porter believes it is "probable" that Chamberlain's wife, Hope, was baptized at the same time (Porter 1971, 260).

12. According to Joseph Smith's history, David Whitmer baptized eleven people in Seneca Lake at the first church conference (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 42). William Smith, one of those baptized, lists ten (I.D.3, WILLIAM SMITH REMINISCENCE, 1883, 16 [minus Katharine Smith]), which is probably more accurate. Whitmer likely had this event in mind when he stated that he had baptized fourteen people in Seneca Lake a few days before 6 April 1830 (VI.A.16, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH J. W. CHATBURN, 1882).

13. Katharine may have believed she was baptized on 6 April (I.E.2, KATHARINE SMITH SALISBURY TO DEAR SISTERS, 10 MAR 1886).

36. Orrin Porter Rockwell[14]
37. Caroline Rockwell
38. Electa Rockwell

Colesville, New York, 28 June 1830[15]

39. Emma (Hale) Smith
40. Hezekiah Peck
41. Martha (Long) Peck
42. Joseph Knight, Sr.
43. Polly (Peck) Knight
44. William Stringham
45. Esther (Knight) Stringham
46. Joseph Knight, Jr.
47. Aaron Culver
48. Esther (Peck) Culver
49. Levi Hall / Sally Knight[16]
50. Polly Knight
51. Julia Ann Stringham

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14. Joseph Smith's history lists a "Peter Rockwell," which is most likely a scribal error. The draft is probably correct in naming "Porter Rockwell," which is also supported by William Smith (I.D.4, WILLIAM SMITH, *ON MORMONISM,* 1883, 16).

15. Thirteen people are listed in Joseph Smith's history as having been baptized by Oliver Cowdery in Colesville, New York, on 28 June (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 43). An earlier history published in April 1833 similarly reported that "on the 28th of June, thirteen were baptized in Colesville" (III.I.5, WILLIAM W. PHELPS ACCOUNT, 1833).

16. Missing from the list in Joseph Smith's history is Sally Knight, wife of Newel Knight, whom Oliver Cowdery said was baptized in Colesville on 29 June (see IV.E.3, SALLY KNIGHT OBITUARY, 1834). Although there may have been two days of baptisms, Larry C. Porter has suggested that Cowdery's dating is incorrect, that Sally was baptized on 28 June with the others (Porter 1971, 201-2). Therefore, there may have been fourteen, rather than thirteen, baptisms in Colesville on this day; but it is also possible that inclusion of Levi Hall was an error. Little is known about him. He stayed in Colesville when the others moved to Ohio, and he thereafter had no connection with the church (Jessee 1989, 489). He may have expressed interest in the church but never joined or withdrew before the 26 September conference. While Smith's history fails to list Sally Knight, it implies that she had been baptized before she sought confirmation in early September (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 51, and n. 167).

Fayette, New York, Circa 1 September 1830

52. Parley P. Pratt[17]

Canaan, Columbia County, New York, 19 September 1830

53. Orson Pratt[18]

Nine more converts are needed to reach sixty-two as of 26 September. Among the most probable candidates are the following two:

Fayette, New York, [September?] 1830

54. Almira Mack[19]

Fayette, New York, 3 September 1830

55. Thomas Marsh[20]

The remaining seven must be taken from a more uncertain pool of candidates:

Fayette, New York, 3 September 1830

56. Elizabeth (Godkin) Marsh[21]

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17. Joseph Smith's history implies that Parley P. Pratt was baptized before he baptized his brother Orson on 19 September (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 77). In fact, Parley reports that he was baptized in Seneca Lake, confirmed, and ordained an elder by Oliver Cowdery about 1 September (see VI.F.7, PARLEY P. PRATT REMINISCENCE, 1856 [PART II]; VI.F.6, PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1854 [PART II], 43).

18. Orson Pratt was baptized in Canaan by his brother Parley (see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 77; VI.F.8, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, 1858).

19. Almira Mack, daughter of Stephen and Temperance Mack, visited Lucy Smith in Manchester, New York, sometime in June. Her baptism date is uncertain. One source lists it as September 1830 (Temple Index Bureau, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah). However, her obituary states: "Sister Almira Covey ... having been baptized in August, 1830, by David Whitmer, and confirmed by Joseph Smith" (*Deseret News,* 17 March 1886, 137). Joseph Smith arrived in Fayette from Harmony just before the conference of 26-28 September, so an August date for Almira's baptism is unlikely. Possibly, the confusion came from the misdating of the conference to 1 September in Joseph Smith's history.

20. Marsh was baptized by David Whitmer in Fayette (see III.K.22, THOMAS B. MARSH HISTORY, 1859; Porter 1971, 263).

21. Larry C. Porter believes it is "probable" that Elizabeth (Godkin)

Fayette, New York, 5 September 1830

57-60. Four heads of families.[22]

Colesville, New York, 6 September 1830 or Fayette, New York, 26 September 1830

61. Freeborn De Mill[23]
62. Anna (Knight) De Mill[24]

From this point there are no definite numbers to guide our reconstruction of early church membership. Numbers are used to track possible total membership.

Fayette, New York, 27-28 September 1830[25]

63. George Beebe
64. Isaac Beebe
65. Olive Beebe

According to the 1833 historical sketch, "in October, 1830, the num-

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Marsh was baptized the same day as her husband, Thomas B. Marsh, on 3 September (Porter 1971, 263).

22. On 5 September, Parley P. Pratt preached at (Philip?) Burroughs's in Fayette and four heads of families were baptized (PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY [PART II], CIRCA 1854, 43).

23. Freeborn De Mill, husband of Anna (Knight) De Mill, was reportedly baptized by Hyrum Smith and confirmed by Joseph Smith on 6 September in Colesville; however, another source dates the baptism to the 26 September conference in Fayette (Porter 1971, 205).

24. The date of Anna (Knight) De Mill's baptism is uncertain. Some have suggested that she was baptized on 28/29 June along with other Knight family members (Porter 1971, 203), while others assume that she accompanied her husband, Freeborn De Mill, into the water, possibly on 6 or 26 September (Porter 1971, 205; the Family Group Record, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, has 29 September 1830).

25 .Joseph Smith's history states that "[a] number were baptized" during the 26-28 September 1830 conference (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 60). If Freeborn and Anna De Mill were baptized on the first day of the conference, they may have been included in the pre-conference count, unlike those who were baptized during the last two days of the conference. Larry C. Porter speculates that among those unnamed were George Beebe, said to have been baptized in September, and perhaps his parents Isaac and Olive (Porter 1971, 264-65).

ber of disciples had increased to between seventy and eighty" (III.E.5, WILLIAM W. PHELPS ACCOUNT, 1833).[26] In October there were baptisms in Manchester prior to the departure of the so-called Lamanite missionaries, as well as in Colesville and Bainbridge.

Manchester, New York, October 1830 (Possibly 10th)[27]

66. Ezra Thayre
67. Northrop Sweet
68. Keziah (Pearce) (Austin) Cowdery

Manchester, New York, Possibly October 1830

69. Dolly Proper[28]

Colesville, New York, 10 October 1830[29]

70-71. Two unnamed persons.

Bainbridge, New York, October 1830[30]

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26. Joseph Smith said that by December 1830, "the little flock ... from Colesville to Canandaigua, New York, numbered about seventy members" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 81).

27. According to Ezra Thayre, he and Northrop Sweet were baptized by Parley P. Pratt on the first Sunday after Joseph Smith arrived in Manchester, possibly on 10 October (see III.J.6, EZRA THAYRE REMINISCENCE, 1862, 82-83). Thayre reported that Keziah (Pearce) (Austin) Cowdery (1773-1860), Oliver's stepmother, was baptized at the same time. In his autobiography, Parley P. Pratt said that "several persons" were baptized (III.K.16, PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY [PART I], CIRCA 1854, 47), but in 1858 he said "seven persons" (Parley P. Pratt, "History of Parley P. Pratt," *Deseret News,* 19 May 1858, 53). If the 1858 source is not a misreading of "several," then numbers 96-99 below might be among the four unidentified persons who were baptized in Manchester in October.

28. Lorenzo Saunders said he saw Oliver Cowdery baptize Dolly Proper in Manchester (LORENZO SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, 17 SEP 1884, n. 38; LORENZO SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, 12 NOV 1884, 7). Pomeroy Tucker errs when he dates her baptism to 6 April (POMEROY TUCKER ACCOUNT, 1867, 59). Dolly's husband, George, may have been baptized at this time as well (see ibid., 38).

29. According to Newel Knight, Hyrum Smith attended a meeting at Aaron Culver's in Colesville on 10 October when two people were baptized (IV.A.2, NEWEL KNIGHT JOURNAL, CIRCA 1846, 23).

30. According to Newel Knight, Hyrum Smith attended a meeting at

72. Ezekiel Peck
73. Electa (Buck) Peck
74-75. Two unknown persons.

Where Joseph Smith's history states that in December the church "in all, from Colesville to Canandai=gua, numbered about seventy members" (I.A.15. JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 81), another source, probably more accurately, states that "[a]t the close of the year 1830 there were about one hundred members of the Church in the State of New York, scattered from Colesville, Broome county, to Canandaigua, Ontario county, a distance of about one hundred miles" ("Journal History," 31 December 1830). Several baptisms occurred in the fall of 1830 in Canandaigua, Colesville, and Fayette.

Colesville, New York, 1 November 1830

76. Elizabeth Knight[31]

Canandaigua, New York, November 1830

77-78. Two unnamed persons.[32]

Colesville, New York, Fall 1830

79. Emily Colburn[33]

Ezekiel Peck's residence in Bainbridge, New York, at which four people were converted and possibly baptized (IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 66-67). Ezekiel and Electa Peck were baptized in October 1830, so it may have been on this occasion (*Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 27 [April 1936]: 78-79; Porter 1971, 206). The baptisms may have been performed in Afton Lake (see V.C.3, MEHETABLE DOOLITTLE REMINISCENCE, 1877).

31. Elizabeth, daughter of Newel and Sally Knight, was baptized in Colesville by Hyrum Smith; she was the youngest person baptized up to that time (b. 22 July 1817) (see the *Utah Genealogical Magazine* 26 [October 1935]: 150).

32. According to Lucy Smith, Joseph Smith, Sr., baptized two individuals after his release from prison, evidently in late November or early December 1830 (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:165; Porter 1971, 103).

33. Emily Colburn, sister of Sally Knight, was baptized in Colesville "several months" after her abduction in June 1830 (see Porter 1971, 201). She was baptized sometime before the Reverend John Sherer wrote his letter of 18 November 1830 (see IV.C.1, JOHN SHERER TO ABSALOM PETERS, 18 NOV 1830, 1).

Fayette, New York, Fall 1830

80. Solomon Humphrey[34]
81. Thankful (Halsey) Pratt[35]

Other possible baptisms that occurred in 1831 before Smith's departure to Ohio in late January are:

Fayette, New York, Early January 1831

82. Joseph Coe[36]
83. James Covill[37]

Palmyra, New York, Late January 1831[38]

84. Preserved Harris

Macedon, New York, Late January 1831[39]

85. Calvin Stoddard
86. Sophronia (Smith) Stoddard

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34. Solomon Humphrey of St. Lawrence County, New York, visited Joseph Smith in the fall of 1830 and was baptized (Porter 1971, 265).

35. Thankful (Halsey) Pratt, wife of Parley P. Pratt, joined the church in Fayette after her husband had left on his mission to the west in October 1830 (Porter 1971, 263-64).

36. After the conference of 2 January 1831, Orson Pratt and Samuel Smith labored with Joseph Coe, possibly baptizing him at that time (VI.F.8, ORSON PRATT REMINISCENCE, 1858; Porter 1971, 98-99).

37. James Covill may have joined in January, but soon after apostatized (Porter 1971, 266). On 5 January, Smith dictated a revelation calling for his baptism and removal to Ohio (D&C 38:10, 14). Another revelation explained that Covill had "received the word with gladness, but straightway satan tempted him; and the fear of persecution and the cares of the world caused him to reject the word" (D&C 40:2).

38. According to Lucy Smith, her son Joseph preached at the home of Preserved Harris in Palmyra in late January 1831, at which time some were baptized (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:171; Porter 1971, 97-98). Preserved, Martin Harris's brother, may have been among those baptized at this time.

39. According to Lucy Smith, Joseph preached at the home of Calvin Stoddard in Macedon, New York, in late January, at which time some were baptized (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:171). This may have been when Calvin and Sophronia Stoddard were baptized (Porter 1971, 96).

Among those baptized after Smith's departure from New York and before the general exodus to Ohio the following spring were:

Pennsylvania, 10 February 1831

87. Emer Harris[40]

Colesville, New York, Circa 20 February 1831

88. Jared Carter[41]

The following are baptisms that occurred on undetermined dates sometime in 1830-31:

Fayette-Waterloo, New York, 1830-31

89. William Scoby[42]
90. Anna Burroughs[43]
91. (Orin?) Chamberlain[44]
92. Margaret Poorman[45]
93. John Pratz[46]
94. Ezra Page[47]
95. Sarah (Conrad) Bunnell[48]

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40. Emer, Martin Harris's brother living in Pennsylvania, was probably baptized by Newel Knight on 10 February (Cook 1981, 155).

41. Jared Carter was baptized by Hyrum Smith in Colesville about 20 February (IV.C.3, JARED CARTER REMINISCENCE, 1832).

42. William Scoby of Fayette, who married Almira Mack, was baptized sometime in 1830-31 (Porter 1971, 261).

43. The wife of Philip Burroughs of Fayette became a member sometime before 24 April 1832 and may have been an early member (Porter 1971, 262-63; Porter 1992, 154).

44. A "Brother Chamberlain" of Waterloo, New York, was visited by Samuel Smith on 22 April 1832 and may have been an early member (Porter 1971, 262).

45. Porter has suggested that Margaret Poorman, wife of John Poorman, was baptized in Fayette about the time her husband was baptized, i.e., 9 June 1830 (Porter 1971, 261).

46. See Porter 1971, 267.

47. Porter 1971, 267-68.

48. Sarah Heller Bunnell, daughter of Joshua and Eve Conrad, lived with Peter Whitmer, Sr., in Fayette at the time the Book of Mormon was being translated. She was married to David E. Bunnell on 15 April 1830 (Porter 1971, 268).

Palmyra-Manchester, New York, 1830-31

96. Lucy Smith[49]
97. John Stacy[50]
98. Mrs. John Stacy
99. Sarah (Sally) Risley[51]

Colesville, New York, 1830-31

100. Josiah Stowell[52]
101. Nahum Knight[53]
102. Thankful Knight[54]
103. Reed Peck[55]
104. Pheby (Crosby) Peck[56]
105. Mary (Molly) Slade[57]

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49. Lucy Smith, Joseph's youngest sister, would have been nine or ten in 1830-31; her baptismal date is presently unknown (Porter 1971, 96).

50. According to one source, John Stacy and wife, of Palmyra, were baptized and moved to Ohio, apparently in the spring of 1831 (see III.J.41, PALMYRA RESIDENT REMINISCENCE, NO DATE).

51. Pomeroy Tucker listed "Widow Sally Risley" as one of Joseph Smith's early followers in Manchester (III.J.8 POMEROY TUCKER ACCOUNT, 1867, 39). This is possibly the same "Mrs. Risley, of Manchester, a cripple," mentioned by Christopher M. Stafford whom the "Prophet Jo told ... he could heal her and she joined the Mormons. Jo failed to heal her and she never walked" (see III.D.3, CHRISTOPHER M. STAFFORD STATEMENT, 23 MAR 1885).

52. Josiah Stowell's baptismal date is unknown, but it may have been at the time four people were baptized in Bainbridge in October 1830 (see introduction to IV.B.2, MARTHA CAMPBELL TO JOSEPH SMITH, 19 DEC 1843).

53. Nahum, the oldest son of Joseph Knight, was probably baptized before the exodus of May 1831 (Porter 1971, 300).

54. Thankful Knight, wife of Nahum, may have been baptized before she and her husband immigrated to Ohio with the Colesville branch in May 1831 (Porter 1971, 300).

55. Reed, son of Hezekiah and Martha (Long) Peck, may have been baptized with his parents on 28 June 1830 or soon thereafter (Porter 1971, 210).

56. Pheby (Crosby) Peck was a widow who immigrated with her children and the Colesville branch to Ohio in May 1831 and was probably a baptized member at that time (Porter 1971, 301).

57. Molly Slade was a widow who immigrated with her children and the Colesville Branch to Ohio in May 1831 and was probably baptized before that event (Porter 1971, 299, 301).

106. Benjamin Slade[58]
107. Roxy Slade[59]
108. Ira J. Willes[60]

In the Mormon exodus from New York in the spring of 1831, Lucy Smith headed a group of about fifty, Thomas B. Marsh led about thirty, and Martin Harris led a group of several families. The Colesville branch emigrated in a group of about sixty people (Porter 1971, 317; Porter 1990, 15-16). From this information and the present reconstruction, it can be safely asserted that at the time of the exodus, the New York contribution to the church exceeded a hundred members, along with their children.

58. Benjamin Slade, a son of Molly Slade listed among those who emigrated with the Colesville branch in May 1831, was probably a baptized member (Porter 1971, 299, 301).

59. Roxy Slade, who accompanied her husband Benjamin to Ohio in 1831, was probably a baptized member at that time.

60. Ira J. Willes, who was about nineteen years old when he immigrated to Ohio with the Colesville branch in May 1831, may have been baptized before the move.

APPENDIX B:
CHRONOLOGY, 1771-1831

The following is a summary of the chronological data gleaned from the documents in this series. Some of the dates are deduced from their relationships to other events and are somewhat tentative, in which cases I include a brief discussion of the documentation and logic. Still, there are many chronological puzzles that remain to be worked out.

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12 July 1771

Joseph Smith, Sr., is born in Topsfield (MA) to Asael and Mary (Duty) Smith (I.H.3, SMITH FAMILY BIBLE RECORDS, NO DATES).

8 March 1772

An infant Joseph Smith, Sr., is baptized at the Topsfield (MA) Congregational church (Anderson 1971, 91-92).

1 May 1772

The Asael Smith family moves to Windham (NH) (Anderson 1971, 92).

15 April 1774

The Asael Smith family moves to Dunbarton (NH) (Anderson 1971, 92-94).

8 July 1775

Lucy Mack is born in Gilsum (NH) to Solomon and Lydia (Gates) Mack (Anderson 1971, 162).

27 May 1778

Asael Smith purchases a 100-acre farm at Derryfield, near Manchester (NH), on the Merrimack River (Anderson 1971, 94).

21 June 1791

Asael Smith purchases a farm in Tunbridge (VT), marking the approximate time of his arrival (Porter 1971, 11).

24 January 1796

Joseph Smith and Lucy Mack are married in Tunbridge (VT) by Seth Austin (II.B.1, JOSEPH SMITH AND LUCY MACK MARRIAGE RECORD, 24 JAN 1796). Soon after their marriage, Joseph and Lucy move

onto a farm in Tunbridge, likely a section of Asael Smith's land on Lot 18 in the "Tunbridge Gore" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS;20; also Porter 1971, 12).

October 1796-April 1797

Lucy Smith gives birth to an unnamed child that dies (I.C.2, JOSEPH SMITH, SR., BLESSINGS, 1834). The low-end date is calculated by adding nine months to the date of their marriage, and the high-end date is calculated by subtracting nine months from Alvin's birth. Joseph Sr.'s phrase "untimely birth" implies a premature delivery, which could revise the low-end date by several months.

6 December 1797

Joseph Sr., along with his father Asael and brother Jesse, helps found the Tunbridge (VT) Universalist Society (II.B.2, TUNBRIDGE [VT] UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY, 6 DEC 1797).

11 February 1798

Alvin Smith is born at Tunbridge (VT) (II.B.3, ALVIN SMITH BIRTH RECORD, 11 FEB 1798).

12 November 1799

Joseph Sr. may have joined the Tunbridge (VT) Anabaptist Society (II.B.4, TUNBRIDGE [VT] ANABAPTIST SOCIETY, 12 NOV 1799).

9 February 1800

Hyrum Smith born at Tunbridge (II.B.5, HYRUM AND SOPHRONIA SMITH BIRTH RECORD, 9 FEB 1800 & 17 MAY 1803).

February 1800-February 1801

The Smiths rent out their Tunbridge farm and move with two children to Randolph (VT). The 1853 edition of Lucy Smith's history is likely incorrect in placing the move in 1802 (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:45). Even her manuscript is less precise, stating that it occurred "<5 or> 6 years" after her marriage, ca. 1801/2 (cf. ibid., MS:20). The high and low dates are derived from the births of Hyrum and Sophronia in Tunbridge, 9 February 1800 and 17 May 1803 respectively. The fact that Hyrum's birth was not recorded at the time—later in conjunction with Sophronia's birth—suggests a possible departure from Tunbridge shortly after Hyrum's birth. In addition, it appears that the Smiths were not enumerated in the 1800 federal census, perhaps indicating a move from Tunbridge in 1800 and possible continued transience during the latter part of the year (II.B.6, TUNBRIDGE [VT] CENSUS RECORD, 1800). At

Randolph, Joseph Sr. begins a merchandising business, and six months after their arrival, Lucy becomes sick with "consumption" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:20).

Spring 1803

The Smiths move back to their Tunbridge (VT) farm (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:24). The 1853 edition of Lucy's history says that the move occurred "immediately after his [Joseph Sr.'s] venture was sent to China" (ibid., 1853:51), but the manuscript has the Smiths still in Randolph at least several months later when the ship returns and Joseph Sr. learns that he has been swindled (ibid., MS:25). The Smiths probably move back to Tunbridge in the spring of 1803 just before Sophronia's birth there (17 May 1803).

17 May 1803

Sophronia Smith is born in Tunbridge (II.B.5, HYRUM AND SOPHRONIA SMITH BIRTH RECORD, 9 FEB 1800 & 17 MAY 1803; also tombstone, *Zion's Advocate* 59 [March 1982]:42).

May-November 1803

Jason Mack visits the Smiths at their Tunbridge (VT) farm on two occasions, six months apart (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS: Frag. 1, 1853:52). Lucy says she had three or four children at the time of the first visit. Since her fourth child, Joseph, was born in Sharon (VT) on 23 December 1805, Jason came after the birth of Sophronia (17 May 1803) and before the Smiths moved to Sharon about August 1804 (see 27 August 1804). The high-end date may be lowered at least three months since Lucy says they spent a "few months" in Royalton (VT) before moving to Sharon (ibid., 1853:56). Thus, it seems likely the visits occurred sometime between May 1803 and about May 1804. If Lucy is correct about a six-month separation between visits, the first one may have occurred between May and November 1803 and the second between November 1803 and May 1804 (see below).

November 1803-May 1804

Jason Mack visits the Smiths in Tunbridge (VT) for a second time (see above).

Circa May 1804

The Smiths move to Royalton (VT) where they remain only a "few months" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:56). Since they move to Sharon about 27 August 1804 and spend at least three months in Royalton, they must have moved there about May 1804.

27 August 1804

Joseph Sr. witnesses two land transactions in Sharon (VT) involving Solomon Mack, one of which was the land the Smiths would soon move onto (II.B.8, SHARON [VT] LAND RECORDS, 27 AUG 1804). At Sharon, Joseph Sr. cultivates his farm in the summer and teaches school in winter. The Smiths remain "a few years" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:26).

23 December 1805

Joseph Smith, Jr., is born in Sharon, Windsor County (VT) (I.H.1, SMITH FAMILY GENEALOGY, 1834).

January 1806-March 1808

The Smiths move back to Tunbridge (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:56). They leave Sharon sometime after Joseph Jr.'s birth (23 December 1805) and before the birth of Samuel Harrison in Tunbridge on 13 March 1808. If the Joseph Sr. teacher's note of 15 March 1806 is authentic, it would suggest a departure after that date (II.B.9, JOSEPH SMITH, SR., TEACHER'S NOTE, 15 MAR 1806). Additionally, if the Supreme Court Record of 1807 refers to Joseph Sr., then the family may have moved after April 1807 (see 1 April 1807). Lucy mentions that the family remained in Tunbridge "a short time," perhaps indicating their arrival there shortly before the birth of Samuel (13 March 1808). There is evidence that Solomon Mack took out a second mortgage on his Sharon land on 21 March 1807, which may have precipitated the Smiths' move to Tunbridge (Anderson 1971, 175).

3 May 1806

Joseph Sr. acts as a witness to a land transaction in Tunbridge (VT) between Solomon Mack "of Sharon" and Daniel G. Mack (II.B.10, TUNBRIDGE [VT] LAND RECORDS, 3 MAY 1806).

1 April 1807

Beniah Woodward is said to have passed a counterfeit $10 bill to a "Joseph Smith of Royalton," perhaps a reference to Joseph Sr. of Sharon/Royalton (see II.B.11, VERMONT SUPREME COURT RECORDS, 1807).

13 March 1808

Samuel Harrison Smith is born in Tunbridge (e.g., I.H.1, SMITH FAMILY GENEALOGY, 1834).

March-December 1808

The Smiths move back to Royalton (VT), where they remain three years

(I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:56) in the "Metcalf neighborhood" (II.A.3, DANIEL WOODWARD ACCOUNT, 1870). Joseph Sr. may have engaged in "merchandising" (I.D.2, WILLIAM SMITH NOTES, CIRCA 1875, 34), and it is said that "Joseph [Jr.] attended school on Dewey Hill, and was taught his letters by Dea[con]. Jonathan Kinney, the schoolmaster there" (Wells 1911, 646).

Circa May 1809

Joseph Sr. is taxed in Royalton (VT) for two two-year-old cows (II.B.13, ROYALTON [VT] ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1809-1811).

13 March 1810

Ephraim Smith is born in Royalton (VT), but dies eleven days later on 24 March (e.g., I.H.1, SMITH FAMILY GENEALOGY, 1834).

Circa May 1810

Joseph Sr. is taxed in Royalton (VT) for two cows (II.B.13, ROYALTON [VT] ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1809-1811).

August 26-November 1810

The Smith family is enumerated in Royalton (VT) in the federal census; they apparently have a young boy (between 10 and 16) living with them at the time (II.B.14, ROYALTON [VT] CENSUS RECORD, 1810).

Circa 1811

Solomon Mack's chapbook, *A Narrative of the Life of Solomon Mack,* is published in Windsor (VT).

13 March 1811

William Smith is born in Royalton (VT) (I.H.1, SMITH FAMILY GENEALOGY, 1834).

April 1811

Joseph Sr. has his first dream/vision in Royalton (VT). According to Lucy Smith, it was "received the next month after William was born" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:Frag. 3, front).

Circa May 1811

Joseph Sr. is taxed in Royalton (VT) for two horses, one cow, and thirteen acres of land (II.B.13, ROYALTON [VT] ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1809-1811). William Smith says that his father was engaged in "merchandising" in Royalton about the beginning of the War of 1812 (I.D.2, WILLIAM SMITH NOTES, CIRCA 1875, 20).

May 1812-May 1813

The Smiths move to Lebanon, Grafton County (NH) (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:58), after the May 1812 Lebanon assessment, which did not list Joseph Sr., and before the May 1813 assessment, when Joseph Sr. was listed for the first time (II.B.15, LEBANON [NH] ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1813-1814). Lucy Smith is likely mistaken in dating this event to 1811 (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1853:58-59). The Smiths are believed to have actually lived in West Lebanon where they apparently remained about two years.

Early 1813

The Smiths are afflicted with typhoid fever in Lebanon (NH) (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, Note A; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:27-33). Lucy says that the fever struck in 1813 for one year. During this time, Joseph Jr. underwent a grueling leg operation in which several pieces of tibia were removed without anesthetic. Soon after, he went to live with his uncle Jesse Smith in Boston. Richard L. Anderson has pointed out that Nathan Smith, the attending physician, moved from Dartmouth College to Yale University in the fall of 1813 and wrote in his 1831 memoirs that he and Professor Perkins began treating cases of "typhus" in the fall of 1812. Anderson concludes that it is "highly probable" that Smith's operation took place in the winter of 1812-13 (Anderson 1970, 86).

1-5 May 1813

Joseph Sr. is listed in the Lebanon (NH) assessment as having four heads of cattle, three of which are cows (II.B.15, LEBANON [NH] ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1813-1814).

28 July 1813

Katharine Smith is born in Lebanon (NH) (I.H.1, SMITH FAMILY GENEALOGY, 1834; I.H.3, SMITH FAMILY BIBLE RECORDS, NO DATE; I.E.1, KATHARINE SMITH SALISBURY AFFIDAVIT, 1881). The following sources give her birth as 1812: I.H.2, CARLOS SMITH FAMILY RECORD, CIRCA 1840; L. Smith 1853, 41; J. Smith 1948, 4:189; and tombstone reproduced in *Zion's Advocate* 59 (April 1982): 59. However, 1813 seems more likely since Lucy implies that Katharine was born after her family's crisis with typhoid.

28 July 1813-May 1814

Joseph Sr. has a second dream/vision, according to Lucy, "soon after" their arrival in Lebanon (NH) (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:

58-59). Lucy mentions that Joseph Sr.'s family consisted of "a wife and seven children," with "two more" children on the way (i.e., Don Carlos and Lucy), indicating that it would have occurred after Katharine's birth on 28 July 1813 and before May 1814 (see below).

1-11 May 1814

Joseph Sr. is listed in the Lebanon (NH) assessment records as owing a $2.00 invoice, an 86-cent town tax, 72-cent school tax, $1.16 highway tax, 32-cent state tax, and no "minister's tax" (II.B.15, LEBANON [NH] ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1813-1814). Unlike the previous years, he apparently did not own enough property to qualify for voting, which is consistent with Lucy's statement that the family was very poor after their bout with typhoid (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:33).

May 1814-March 1816

The Smiths move to Norwich (VT) onto the farm of Squire Murdock (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:33). The date of their arrival is difficult to determine. What seems certain is that they moved from Lebanon (NH) between the tax assessments of May 1814 and May 1815, but exactly when they arrived in Norwich is less clear, although it was certainly before the birth of Don Carlos on 25 March 1816. The "warning out" which the Smiths apparently received on 15 March 1816 from Norwich officials might narrow this time frame since the law required officials to warn out families within one year of their arrival (see II.B.16, SMITH FAMILY WARNING OUT OF NORWICH [VT], 27 MAR 1816). Thus, the Smiths could have left Lebanon between March 1815 (according to legal requirements of the warning) and the beginning of May 1815 (when Lebanon's assessment was taken, absent the Smiths). If one chooses to disregard the legal requirements of the warning, the Smiths could have left Lebanon immediately after the May 1814 assessment and arrived in Norwich on time for the spring planting season for the first of three crop failures in the summer of 1814, as Lucy claims. Still, Lucy may have erred on the number of years her family lived in Norwich, or the Smiths may have lived in a remote quarter in or near the town and later moved onto Murdock's property.

July/August 1815

The Smiths experience their second crop failure in Norwich (see above).

March 1816

Joseph Sr. has his third dream/vision. The 1853 edition of Lucy Smith's history places it in Palmyra/Manchester (NY) in 1822, but her prelimi-

nary draft indicates that it was in the "same month that carlos was born" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:70, MS:Frag. 4).

15 March 1816

The Smiths are warned out of Norwich (issued 15 March, recorded 27 March) (II.B.16, SMITH FAMILY WARNING OUT OF NORWICH [VT], 27 MAR 1816).

25 March 1816

Don Carlos Smith is born in Norwich (I.H.1, SMITH FAMILY GENEALOGY, 1834).

July/August 1816

The Smiths' crops fail for the third season in Norwich due to an "untimely frost" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:33). The result of the volcanic explosion of Tambora on the island of Sumbawa in the East Indies in 1815, New England experienced severe cold and snow in the mid-summer of 1816 that destroyed most crops (see Bushman 1984, 200, n. 99; Porter 1971, 29-30).

Summer 1816

Joseph Sr. leaves Norwich after the third crop failure, probably in the late summer or fall of 1816 (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:33). In various accounts attributed to Joseph Smith, Jr., his father leaves Vermont when Joseph Jr. is "ten years old," which would be in 1816 (I.A.7, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 2; I.A.10, JOSEPH SMITH TO OLIVER COWDERY, DEC 1834; I.A.19, JOSEPH SMITH TO JOHN WENTWORTH, 1 MAR 1842, 706; I.A.24, JOSEPH SMITH TO I. DANIEL RUPP, 1843, 404). The 1839 history has "tenth year" (1815), to which Willard Richards (probably in 1842) added "or thereabouts" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 1). Pomeroy Tucker says that the Smiths arrived in Palmyra in the "summer of 1816" (III.J.8, POMEROY TUCKER ACCOUNT, 1867, 12).

Winter 1816-17

Lucy and the children arrive in Palmyra, Ontario (Wayne after 1823) County (NY). Joseph Smith, Jr., remembered that "the snow was generally deep through the country during this Journey" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, Note A). A note in Martha Coray's notebook for Lucy Smith's history reads: "1816 [1817] moved to ... Palmyra in Jan[uary]" ("Copy of an Old Note Book," Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah). William Smith reportedly placed the move in 1816 or 1817 when he was five years

old (I.D.1, WILLIAM SMITH INTERVIEW WITH JAMES MURDOCK, 1841; I.D.4, WILLIAM SMITH, *ON MORMONISM,* 1883, 5).

April 1817

Joseph Sr. appears on the Palmyra road list, apparently at the west end of Main Street (III.L.1, PALMYRA [NY] ROAD LISTS, 1817-1822).

27 March 1818

Joseph Sr. and Alvin Smith sign a promissory note to Jeremiah Hurlbut for $65 "to be Paid in good Merchant Grain at the market Price by the first January next."[1] The crop was to be raised on a portion of Hurlbut's land and in partnership with him.

April 1818

Joseph Sr. appears on the Palmyra road list, apparently at the west end of Main Street (III.L.1, PALMYRA [NY] ROAD LISTS, 1817- 1822).

May 1818

Joseph Sr. has his sixth dream/vision (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:Frags. 2 & 4). A note under the heading of Frag. 4 of Lucy Smith's history reads: "I thought May the same year that carlos was 2 years old [1818]."

8-22 May 1818

Joseph Sr. and sons, mostly Hyrum, work for Jeremiah Hurlbut, who owned thirty acres of land in Palmyra at the west end of Main Street near the Smiths' residence and store.[2]

10 May 1818

Joseph Sr. incurs a 75-cent debt to Jeremiah Hurlbut for "two bushels of oats."[3]

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1. Joseph Smith, Sr., and Alvin Smith, Promissory Note, 27 March 1818, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York. This document and others dealing with legal actions between Joseph Sr. and Alvin Smith and Jeremiah Hurlbut were made available for public inspection after publication of volumes 2 and 3 of *Early Mormon Documents.* They were first located by researchers from Brigham Young University and the LDS Church Archives in the summer of 2001.

2. Joseph Smith, Sr., Declaration for Articles of Account, Jeremiah Hurlbut Debtor, 1818, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York.

3. Jeremiah Hurlbut, Declaration for Articles of Account, Joseph Smith,

15 May 1818

Joseph Sr. incurs a 75-cent debt to Jeremiah Hurlbut for "2 bushels of Rye & chess [cheese]."

20 May 1818

Joseph Sr. incurs a 93-cent debt to Jeremiah Hurlbut for "2½ bushels of oats."

24 May 1818

Joseph Sr. incurs a $5.30 debt to Jeremiah Hurlbut: 75 cents for "Planting corn one day," 37 cents for "½ bushel of seed corn," 43 cents for "½ bushel of Flax seed," and $3.75 for "10 bushels of Patatoes."

June 1818

Joseph Sr. incurs a $6.37 debt to Jeremiah Hurlbut: $3.75 for "300 Nails," $1.12 for "hoing corn 1½ days," and $1.50 for "hoing corn 2 days on the west lot."

July 1818

Joseph Sr. incurs a $3.37 debt to Jeremiah Hurlbut: $3.00 for "3d days works hoing corn on the east lot & Mowing myself," and 37 cents for "sowing Buckwheat ½ day."

10 July-[August?] 1818

Joseph Sr., Hyrum, and Joseph Jr. work for Jeremiah Hurlbut.[4]

August 1818

Joseph Sr. incurs a $6.74½ debt to Jeremiah Hurlbut: $3.50 for "½ Ton of hay," 37 cents for "shoeing a horse," $1.25 for "use of a plow most of the summer," and $1.62½ for paying "half of Tax on Land" that Smith leased from Hurlbut.[5]

10 August 1818

Joseph Sr. and Alvin Smith are given $53 credit toward a $65 promis-

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Sr., Debtor, 1818, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York. This is also the source for the subsequent debts to Hurlbut in May, June, and July 1818.

4. Joseph Smith, Sr., Declaration for Articles of Account, Jeremiah Hurlbut Debtor, 1818, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York.

5. Assessment records for 1818 indicate that Hurlbut owed $3.26 for taxes on land. The total charges to Joseph Sr. for May-August 1818 ($0.75,

sory note for "Crops on the ground." With interest (39 cents), the balance due is $13.89.[6]

Circa 1818 (A)

Joseph Jr., at twelve years old, begins to read the Bible and investigate various churches (I.A.7, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 1-2).

Circa 1818 (B)

Lydia Mack dies at Tunbridge (VT) in about 1818 (Anderson 1971, 25; Bushman 1984, 201). She had accompanied Lucy Smith and the children part way on their trip to Palmyra, but because of an injury suffered by the "upsetting of the sleigh," she "tarried by the way with her friends in Vermont, & we soon after heard of her death supposing that she never recovered from the injury received by the overturn of the sleigh" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, Note A; but see Anderson 1971, 181, n. 93). Lucy said they left Lydia in Royalton (VT) where Daniel Mack lived and that she died "two years afterwards" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:35, 1853:68, 69). According to Orlando Mack, son of Solomon Jr., who published a "Record of Grandfather Mack's Family," "Lydia, our Grandmother, died in Tunbridge, Vermont" (T. E. Spilman, *Simi-Centenarians of Butler Grove Township* [Montgomery County, Illinois], cited in the *Improvement Era* [February 1956]: 110).

12 January 1819

Justice Abraham Spear issues a summons in the case of Joseph Sr. vs. Jeremiah Hurlbut.[7]

22 January 1819

Joseph Sr. and Jeremiah Hurlbut appear in the office of Justice Abraham

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$0.75, $0.93, $5.30, $6.37, $3.37, $6.74) equaled $24.21, to which Hurlbut added $25 "for not working land according to agreement" and $28 for "damage sustained in the wrong apprisal of crops" for a total of "$76.81½ [$77.21½]."

6. Although dated 10 August 1818, it is likely that the $53 credit was added to the promissory note by Justice Abraham Spear on 6 February 1819 when it was found that Joseph Sr. and Alvin had mostly fulfilled their contract with Jeremiah Hurlbut. The credit probably derived from a reversal of Hurlbut's claimed damages: $25 "for not working land according to agreement" and $28 for "damage sustained in the wrong apprisal of crops." The remaining $13.89 ($13.50 + .39 interest) perhaps represents the cost of harvesting. The date of 10 August 1818 probably represents the end of the Hurlbut-Smith partnership.

7. Joseph Smith, Sr., vs. Jeremiah Hurlbut, Transcript (Narratio), Court of Common Pleas, 1819, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York. This is also the source for the next three entries.

Spear. Smith, as plaintiff, presents a "Declaration ... for several articles of account and one Item ... for Damages ... sustained in the purchase of a span of horses of Defendant which horses was said to be unsound. Defendant Denies the Charge and pleads a set off of a balance Due on a note and several articles of account." The court adjourns until 30 January.

30 January 1819

Joseph Sr. and Jeremiah Hurlbut appear at Asa Lilly's tavern and "plaintiff request[s] that the cause should be tried by a Jury." The court adjourns until 6 February.

6 February 1819

A jury of twelve is summoned and assembled by Constable Daniel Hindee, probably at Asa Lilly's tavern. Justice Abraham Spear examines five witnesses for the plaintiff, including Joseph Jr. and Hyrum Smith, and seven for the defendant. The jury "found for the plaintiff $40.78." Adding $4.76 for court costs, Hurlbut therefore owed $45.54. At the same time, Justice Spear records on the promissory note a credit of $53 for "Crops on the ground" (see 10 August 1818). On 9 February 1819, Justice Spear notes Jeremiah Hurlbut's appeal to the Ontario County Court of Common Pleas (see August 1819).

8 February 1819

Jeremiah Hurlbut, Solomon Tice, and William Jackways sign a bond for $81.56, double the judgment in favor of Joseph Smith, Sr. The bond acknowledges damages of $40.78 plus costs of $4.76, which Hurlbut and co-signers promise to pay, plus interest and court costs, should his appeal to the Court of Common Pleas fail.[8]

April 1819

Joseph Sr. appears on the Palmyra (NY) road list, still apparently at the west end of Main Street (III.L.1, PALMYRA [NY] ROAD LISTS, 1817-1822). By law, Alvin, who turned twenty-one on 11 February 1819, should have been listed; this suggests that he was temporarily absent, perhaps boarding and working in a neighboring township. Although he signed the promissory note to Jeremiah Hurlbut with his father on 27 March 1818, his name is conspicuously absent from the Smith-Hurlbut records of debt (May-August 1818) as well as from the transcript of the

8. Jeremiah Hurlbut, Solomon Tice, and William Jackways, Bond to Joseph Smith, Sr., 8 February 1819, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York.

trial (12 January-6 February 1819). Hurlbut's May 1819 provisional complaint would state that "Alvin returned by the Sheriff of the said county not found," although Joseph Sr. would be in custody (see May 1819).

April 1819-April 1820

The Smiths move into a small log cabin on the property of Samuel Jennings on Stafford Road near the southern border of Palmyra township (see 13 June 1820). In April 1819, the Palmyra road list indicates that Joseph Smith is at the west end of Main Street. But in April 1820, Alvin appears as fifteenth and Joseph Sr., as forty-second on a forty-four-name list, probably indicating that part of the Smith family moved sometime between April 1819 and April 1820 to the south end of Stafford Road (III.L.1, PALMYRA [NY] ROAD LISTS, 1817-1822). A Palmyra road survey of 13 June 1820 describes the "Joseph Smith dwelling house" as being on Stafford Road about fifty feet northwest of the Palmyra/Manchester township line (III.L.2, PALMYRA [NY] HIGHWAY SURVEY, 13 JUN 1820).

May 1819

Jeremiah Hurlbut issues a provisional complaint stating that Joseph Sr. and Alvin Smith have not paid him, either in part or in whole, for a $65 promissory note bearing the date of 27 March 1818, nor have the two paid damages amounting to $140. The complaint is submitted by attorney Frederick Smith and filed 26 June 1819.[9]

August 1819

In the case of Jeremiah Hurlbut vs. Joseph Sr. and Alvin Smith, a motion is entered by attorney Frederick Smith for Hurlbut. Joseph Sr. and Alvin Smith "default in not pleading," therefore the justices "ordered Interlocu=tory Judgement and that the clerk assess the damages."[10]

23-31 December 1819

Joseph Sr. has his seventh dream/vision (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HIS-

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9. Jeremiah Hurlbut vs. Joseph Sr. and Alvin Smith, Provisional Complaint (*De bene esse*), Ontario County Court of Common Pleas, May 1819, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York.

10. Jeremiah Hurlbut vs. Joseph Sr. and Alvin Smith, Appeal, Ontario County Court of Common Pleas Minutes (1818-47), August 1819 term, Court Record, 10, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York. Copied into the Ontario County Court of Common Pleas Minutes (1819-20), County Record, Liber 8, 19, Ontario County Records Center and Archives.

TORY, 1845, MS:Frag. 2, 1853:73-74). Lucy's 1853 edition says that this occurred in 1819 and her manuscript says that Joseph Jr. was fourteen; strictly speaking, this would have been between 23-31 December 1819.

1820

Fourteen-year-old Joseph Jr. is shot at by an unidentified person (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:58-59).

[Early spring 1820]

Joseph Jr. would ascribe a first vision experience to this year or sometime in the early 1820s. His accounts of this experience differ. His 1832 history says that he saw Christ in 1821 (I.A.7, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 1, 3), whereas his 1839 history and subsequent accounts include two personages in the vision—the Father and the Son—and it is dated to the spring of 1820 (e.g., I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 3; I.A.19, JOSEPH SMITH TO JOHN WENTWORTH, 1 MAR 1842, 706-7). The 1839 history places the vision in the context of the 1824-25 Palmyra revival (see fall 1824-winter 1825).

Spring 1820

Joseph Jr. leads a money-digging group in the Palmyra area in the spring of 1820, according to Pomeroy Tucker (III.J.8, POMEROY TUCKER ACCOUNT, 1867, 21-22; III.J.5, POMEROY TUCKER REMINISCENCE, 1858). Willard Chase remembered that the Smiths were involved with money digging in 1820 (I.A.14, WILLARD CHASE STATEMENT, CIRCA 11 DEC 1833, 240).

April 1820

Alvin appears as fifteenth and Joseph Sr. as forty-second on a forty-four-name list for Palmyra road district 26 (III.L.1, PALMYRA [NY] ROAD LISTS, 1817-1822). Alvin was apparently on Main Street, perhaps running the family's cake and ale shop, and Joseph Sr. was south on Stafford Road near the Palmyra township line, evidently occupying the Jennings cabin (see April 1819-April 1820 and 13 June 1820).

13 June 1820

A road survey mentions "Joseph Smith's dwelling house" as being 58.74 feet northwest from the center of Stafford Road at the extreme southern border of Palmyra township (III.L.2, PALMYRA [NY] ROAD SURVEY, 13 JUN 1820). This cabin was situated on Samuel Jennings's land.

21 June 1820

The executors of Nicholas Evertson's estate convey to Casper W. Eddy,

a New York City physician, power of attorney to sell Evertson's land holdings, including the 100-acre lot the Smiths later purchase (III.L.4, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND RECORDS, 1820-1830).

22 June 1820

The entire 300 acres of Farmington (now Manchester) Lot 1 is taxed to the heirs of Nicholas Evertson, indicating that the Smiths had not yet contracted for their land (III.L.6, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1821-1823 & 1830).

13 July 1820

Alvin Smith incurs a 63-cent debt with Gain Robinson (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

14 July 1820

In Canandaigua (NY), Casper W. Eddy transfers to Zachariah Seymour power of attorney over Evertson land in Farmington (later Manchester) (III.L.4, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND RECORDS, 1820-1830).

14 July 1820-5 February 1821

Joseph Sr. and Alvin contract with Zachariah Seymour for 100 acres of the Evertson land in Farmington (III.L.4, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND RECORDS, 1820-1830). This occurred after Seymour received power of attorney for the land on 14 July 1820 and before 5 February 1821, the last possible day for the 1820 census which lists the Smiths in Farmington, indicating that the Smiths had already contracted for the land.

7 August 1820-5 February 1821

The Smiths are enumerated in the 1820 Farmington (later Manchester) census. This seems possible only if the Smiths had already contracted for the land and were planning to move onto the property. Both Joseph Jr. and Samuel Harrison are missing from the 1820 census, perhaps because they were hired out in another township (III.L.3, FARMINGTON [NY] CENSUS RECORD, 1820). As family No. 524 on a 661-name list, the Smiths were among the last 25 percent to be enumerated—toward the end of the census taking but not necessarily as late as February 1821.

23 August 1820

Solomon Mack dies (age 87) in Gilsum (NH) (Anderson 1971, 25).

31 March 1821

Farmington is divided, the west half retaining the name Farmington and

the east designated as Burt—later Manchester (see 16 April 1822). However, the town records continue to list Farmington for both areas.

April 1821

Joseph Sr., Alvin, and Hyrum appear on the Palmyra road list, apparently all south of Palmyra village on Stafford Road (III.L.1, PALMYRA [NY] ROAD LISTS, 1817-1822).

7 July 1821

Smith's Farmington (Manchester) land is assessed at $700, the typical value of unimproved land (III.L.6, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1821-1823). This is the first time the Smiths are taxed for their land, the previous assessment of 22 June 1820 having taxed the heirs of Nicholas Evertson for the entire 300 acres of Lot 1.

14 July 1821-5 February 1822

The second payment on the Smiths' Farmington (Manchester) farm comes due (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:37-38). Lucy says there were three payments, that the first was broken up into several installments, and that her family had "made nearly all of the first payment" in one year but that "the second payment was now coming due and no means as yet of meeting it." She further states that Alvin left home to find work and raise "the second payment and the remainder of the first" and returned with "the necessary amount of money for all except the last payment" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:37-40).

18 July 1821

Lucy Smith is born in Palmyra (NY), perhaps indicating that the Smiths had not yet moved to Farmington (I.H.1, SMITH FAMILY GENEALOGY, 1834).

1 September 1821

Samuel Jennings dies, Joseph Sr. owing him $12.50 (III.L.7, SAMUEL JENNINGS ESTATE PAPERS, 1822).

5 January 1822

The inventory of the Samuel Jennings estate shows that Joseph Sr. owed $12.50 to Jennings, who died on 1 September 1821 (III.L.7, SAMUEL JENNINGS ESTATE PAPERS, 1822).

April 1822

Joseph Sr. and Alvin appear on the Palmyra road list, indicating that the Smiths had not yet moved to their Farmington (Manchester) property (III.L.1, PALMYRA [NY] ROAD LISTS, 1817-1822).

16 April 1822

Burt township is renamed Manchester (see 31 March 1821).

29 June 1822

The Smiths' Manchester land is assessed at $700, indicating that no significant improvements had been made (III.L.6, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1821-1823 & 1830).

2 July 1822

Zachariah Seymour, the Smiths' land agent, dies (*Palmyra Herald*, 17 July 1822), leaving the Smiths no way of making the last payment (due between 14 July 1822 and 5 February 1823).

June 1822-July 1823

The Smiths complete construction of the log cabin and move onto the Manchester farm (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:37). The date is deduced from the following facts: (1) the Smiths were still in Palmyra when daughter Lucy was born on 18 July 1821; (2) Joseph Sr. and Alvin appear on the Palmyra road list in April 1822; (3) Lucy Mack Smith describes the events of 1823 as "the spring after we moved onto the farm" (MS:39); (4) on 24 July 1823, the Smith property was assessed at $1000, a significant increase from the previous year, indicating completion of the cabin after June 1822 and before July 1823 (III.L.6, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1821-1823 & 1830); (5) Joseph Jr. said that it was about four years after his father's arrival in Palmyra (1816) that his family moved to Manchester, which might refer to the purchase of the property sometime between 14 July 1820 and 5 February 1821 (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 1); and (6) William Smith said that the move occurred in 1821 (I.D.4, WILLIAM SMITH, *ON MORMONISM,* 1883, 5; I.D.2, WILLIAM SMITH NOTES, CIRCA 1875, 17).

14 July 1822-5 February 1823

Due to the death of land agent Zachariah Seymour on 2 July 1822, the Smiths are unable to make the third and final payment on the Manchester farm (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:39).

Circa summer/fall 1822

A brown seer stone is found while digging a well on the Chase property in 1822, probably in the summer or fall after the harvest season when they had time for such activities (III.A.14, WILLARD CHASE STATEMENT, CIRCA 11 DEC 1833, 240-41). Willard Chase claimed that he

found the stone, that Smith borrowed it from him, that Smith had the stone for two years and then returned it, and that in 1825 Hyrum borrowed the stone and never returned it.

24 July 1823

The Smiths' Manchester land is assessed at $1,000, indicating completion of the log cabin after June 1822 and before July 1823 (III.L.6, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1821-1823 & 1830).

21-22 September 1823

During the late night and early morning hours, Joseph Jr. has a vision of an "angel" or "spirit" who appears three times and tells him about the plates buried in a nearby hill (e.g., I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 7; see also I.A.7, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 1, 4, which dates the vision to 22 September 1822 but gives Smith's age as seventeen [1823]). Lucy Mack Smith seems to separate Joseph's nocturnal angelic visitations from his discovery of the plates by about two months, dating the angelic visitations to harvest time in July 1823 and the visit to the hill on 22 September 1823 (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:40-41). This gap conflicts with Joseph's own accounts which, when the 1832 account is corrected, consistently place the angel's visits on the evening of 21-22 September 1823 and the discovery of the plates on the day following.

22 September 1823

Joseph Jr. visits the nearby Manchester hill and three times fails to obtain the plates. The angel/spirit instructs him to return to the hill at the same time the following year (e.g., I.A.7, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 4; I.C.1, JOSEPH SMITH, SR., INTERVIEW WITH FAYETTE LAPHAM, 1830, 306; III.G.11, OLIVER COWDERY TO W. W. PHELPS, JUL 1835; III.G.13, OLIVER COWDERY TO W. W. PHELPS, OCT 1835). In some accounts, he is told to return the following year with his older brother Alvin (e.g., III.B.12, LORENZO SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, 17 SEP 1884, 9-10; III.B.15, LORENZO SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, 12 NOV 1884, 16; IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 1).

23 September 1823

Joseph Jr. gives his family a detailed description of the angel/spirit and golden plates in the family's evening conversations (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:42-43; I.D.1, WILLIAM SMITH INTERVIEW

WITH JAMES MURDOCK, 1841; I.D.4, WILLIAM SMITH, *ON MORMONISM,* 1883, 9-10; I.D.5, WILLIAM SMITH TESTIMONY, 1884, 643).

30 October 1823

Joseph (Sr./Jr.?) incurs a $4.25 debt and Hyrum incurs an $11.75 debt with Gain Robinson (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

1-15 November 1823

The Smiths begin construction of their frame house. According to Lucy Smith, "when the month of November 1822 [1823] arrived the House was raised and all the Materials procured for completing the building" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:45).

15 November 1823

Alvin gets sick and the doctors attending him administer a "heavy dose of Calomel," which results in his death four days later (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS: 45).

17 November 1823

Joseph (probably Sr.) incurs a $6.63 debt with Gain Robinson and a $6.13 debt with Cains Robinson (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

19 November 1823

Dr. Alexander McIntyre and four other physicians, including perhaps Gain Robinson, attend to Alvin Smith, but Alvin dies (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:46; III.L.8, ALVIN SMITH GRAVESTONE, 19 NOV 1823).

20 November 1823

The possible date of Alvin Smith's autopsy (see III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830, under 20 November 1823).

17 May 1824

John Greenwood of New York City receives power of attorney over the Evertson lands and becomes the Smiths' new land agent (III.L.4, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND RECORDS, 1820-1830).

22 September 1824

Joseph Jr. returns to the Manchester hill (without Alvin) and fails to get

the plates (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 7; I.C.1, JOSEPH SMITH, SR., INTERVIEW WITH FAYETTE LAPHAM, 1830, 307; IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 1). According to some sources, Joseph was instructed to bring Samuel Lawrence with him on his next annual visit (III.A.14, WILLARD CHASE STATEMENT, CIRCA 11 DEC 1833, 243; III.B.12, LORENZO SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, 17 SEP 1884, 10), but other sources say that he was instructed to bring his future wife, whom he had not yet met (III.A.15, HENRY HARRIS STATEMENT, CIRCA 1833, 252; III.B.15, LORENZO SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, 12 NOV 1884, 16; III.F.1, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEWS WITH JOHN A. CLARK, 1827 & 1828, 225-26; I.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 1). It is likely that no future visits were planned at this time and that Samuel Lawrence and Emma Hale are retrospective insertions into the story.

25 September 1824

As a result of community gossip, Joseph Sr. and a few neighbors exhume Alvin's body and report in the local newspaper that the body was found undisturbed (III.E.1, *WAYNE SENTINEL*, 1824-1836, under 29 September 1824).

Fall 1824-Winter 1825

Palmyra experiences a religious revival, during which Lucy and three of her older children (Hyrum, Sophronia, and Samuel) join the Presbyterian church (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 1-2; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:49-50; see also Walters 1969a; Walters 1969b; M. Hill 1982). It was probably during this 1824-25 revival that Joseph Jr.'s "mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them," but he did not join (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 2; see also III.J.2, ORSAMUS TURNER ACCOUNT, 1851, 214; III.J.8, POMEROY TUCKER ACCOUNT, 1867, 18).

January-October 1825

Hyrum borrows the seer stone from Willard Chase (III.A.14, WILLARD CHASE STATEMENT, CIRCA 11 DEC 1833, 241). This occurred before late October when Joseph Jr. carried it with him in accompanying Josiah Stowell to Harmony (PA).

18 February 1825

Joseph Sr. appears before Justice Peter Mitchell and acknowledges a $66.59

debt to Russell Stoddard "for work & labour & lumber Which the said plaintiff did for me in building a dwelling house."[11]

2 May 1825

Joseph (probably Sr.) incurs a $9.38 debt with Gain Robinson (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

20 May 1825

The execution order is issued by Justice Peter Mitchel in the case of Russell Stoddard vs. Joseph Smith, Sr., probably authorizing the constable to collect damages or to arrest Joseph Sr.

22 September 1825

Joseph Jr.'s second annual visit to Manchester hill and failure to retrieve the golden plates (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 7).

10 October 1825

Enoch Saunders, father of Lorenzo and Benjamin Saunders, dies (III.D.9, LORENZO SAUNDERS STATEMENT, 21 JUL 1887). The Smiths, particularly Hyrum and Joseph Sr., attend to Enoch during his illness (III.B.6, ORLANDO SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, 1881; III.B.13, BENJAMIN SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, CIRCA SEP 1884, 30; III.B.15, LORENZO SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, 12 NOV 1884, 12).

10-24 October 1825

The Smith family meets Josiah Stowell, who hires Joseph Jr. to locate a lost Spanish mine in Harmony (PA) with a seer stone (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 8; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:91-92; III.F.10, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEW WITH JOEL TIFFANY, 1859, 164; III.G.13, OLIVER COWDERY TO W. W. PHELPS, OCT 1853, 200-201). Joseph Jr. says that Stowell came in October 1825. This was probably after Enoch Saunders's death on 10 October and before 26 October 1825 when Stowell evidently returned to South Bainbridge to pay an old debt to Otis Loveland (Zechariah Tarble, Docket Book, 1822-26, South Bainbridge Town Hall, South Bainbridge, New York). The high-end date is determined by subtracting a minimal two-day trip from Manchester to South Bainbridge.

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11. Russell Stoddard vs. Joseph Smith, Sr., 1825 Common Pleas Transcripts, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York. This is also the source for 20 May 1825 below.

12-26 October 1825

Both Joseph Sr. and Joseph Jr. accompany Josiah Stowell to South Bainbridge (NY) before continuing on to Harmony (PA). Joseph Jr. says that Stowell took him to Harmony "[a]fter I went to live with <him>" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 8). An October return to South Bainbridge seems to be supported by Stowell's statement during Joseph Jr.'s March 1826 court hearing that Joseph had been at his house about five months (IV.F.1, BAINBRIDGE [NY] COURT RECORD, 20 MAR 1826). The low-end date is determined by adding to Enoch Saunders's death date a minimal two-day trip from Manchester to South Bainbridge.

24 October 1825

The Erie Canal officially opens (Backman 1980, 46; Bushman 1984, 45).

October/November 1825

The Smiths' frame house is completed. Lucy says that Josiah Stowell visited them "a short time before the house was completed" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:91). It is uncertain if the house was completed before or after Joseph Sr. and Joseph Jr. left for Chenango County (NY) in mid-late October.

1 November 1825

Joseph Sr.'s and Joseph Jr.'s names appear on the "Articles of Agreement" for Josiah Stowell's money-digging company, drafted and signed with seven other men in Harmony on 1 November (V.E.1, ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT, 1 NOV 1825).

Circa 1-17 November 1825

The Smiths (Joseph Sr. and Joseph Jr.) and the money digging company board with Isaac Hale in Harmony (PA). Hale says that the company dispersed about 17 November (V.A.1, ISAAC HALE STATEMENT, 1834, 264). Judging from one member's unpaid bill, which Hale says was $12.68, the company must have lodged with him for at least seventeen days (about 74½ cents per day), or perhaps even longer (cf. Joseph Jr.'s three meals and one night's lodging at 50 cents in IV.F.5, EBENEZER HATCH BILL OF COSTS, 4 JUL 1830).

November/December 1825

In Joseph Sr.'s absence, Russell Stoddard obtains the deed to the Smiths' land through deceit, telling the land agent that Joseph Sr. had abandoned his family. Hyrum visits the land agent in Canandaigua and assures him that his father will return in time to make the final payment on 25 De-

cember 1825 as previously arranged. As instructed by the land agent, Hyrum sends letters to taverns along the route to Chenango County (NY) in an attempt to contact his father, who discovers one of these letters about fifty miles from Palmyra (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:53-54; I.D.4, WILLIAM SMITH, *ON MORMONISM,* 1883, 14).

Circa 15 December 1825

Possible date the two Josephs returned to Manchester (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:55). Lucy Smith says they returned on the Thursday before Lemuel Durfee bought the Smith farm, which occurred on Tuesday, 20 December 1825 (see 20 December 1825).

20 December 1825

Lemuel Durfee buys the Smith farm and allows the Smiths to remain on the property as "renters" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:56-58; III.L.4, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND RECORDS, 1820-1830). Lucy says that "Mr Durfy gave us the privilege of the place [for] one year with this provision that samuel our 4th son was to labor for him 6 months. ... [I]f after we had kept the place in this way one year we still chose to remain we could have the priviledge" (see also 16 April 1827).

20 December 1825-19 March 1826

Joseph Sr. and Joseph Jr. return to the Colesville/South Bainbridge (NY) area sometime after Lemuel Durfee bought the Smith farm on 20 December 1825 and before 19 March 1826 when Joseph Jr. is served a warrant in South Bainbridge. It is probable that their stay in Manchester was short because Josiah Stowell would testify at the 20 March 1826 court hearing that Joseph Jr. lived with him for five months (i.e., November 1825-March 1826), implying continuous lodging (IV.F.1, BAINBRIDGE [NY] COURT RECORD, 20 MAR 1826). This was probably the time when Josiah Stowell, Jr., said he went to school with Joseph Jr. "one winter" and Joseph was "about 20 years old or there about" (IV.B.1, JOSIAH STOWELL, JR., TO JOHN S. FULLMER, 17 FEB 1843; IV.D.8, ASA B. SEARLES REMINISCENCE, 1882). It is also possible that Lucy is mistaken and that only Joseph Sr. returned to Manchester.

19 March 1826

Peter Bridgman, a nephew of Josiah Stowell, issues a warrant accusing Joseph Jr. of being "a disorderly person and an Impostor." Joseph is served a warrant by Constable Philip DeZeng on 19 March 1826 and spends two

days and one night in custody (IV.F.3, PHILIP DEZENG BILL OF COSTS, 1826).

20 March 1826

Joseph Jr. appears at preliminary hearing before South Bainbridge Justice Albert Neely (IV.F.1, BAINBRIDGE [NY] COURT RECORD, 20 MAR 1826; IV.F.2, ALBERT NEELY BILL OF COSTS, 20 MAR 1826). Neely finds cause to proceed with trial and releases Smith on his own recognizance. When Neely learns that Smith has unlawfully crossed the county line into Colesville (presumably to the home of Joseph Knight), Neely orders Constable DeZeng to arrest and return Smith to South Bainbridge ("10 miles ... with Mittimus to take him") and to notify two other justices (IV.F.3, PHILIP DEZENG BILL OF COSTS, 1826). Apparently Smith and Neely work out an off-the-record agreement requiring that Smith discontinue treasure seeing and remove from South Bainbridge for six months. W. D. Purple, who mistakenly dates the trial to February 1826, says that Smith left town "a few weeks" after trial (IV.D.2, WILLIAM D. PURPLE REMINISCENCE, 28 APR 1877).

12 June 1826

Lemuel Durfee's will is drafted with a provision to sell the Smith property and distribute the sales among Durfee's heirs (III.L.4, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND RECORDS, 1820-1830).

22 September 1826

Joseph Jr.'s third annual visit to the Manchester hill and failure to obtain the golden plates (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 7).

Fall 1826 (A)

Joseph Jr. or Hyrum refuses to return the brown seer stone to Willard Chase (III.A.14, WILLARD CHASE STATEMENT, CIRCA 11 DEC 1833, 241).

Fall 1826 (B)

Joseph Jr. takes Samuel Lawrence to Harmony (PA) to seek treasure on the banks of the Susquehanna River. Lawrence recommends his friend to Emma Hale for marriage (III.A.14, WILLARD CHASE STATEMENT, CIRCA 11 DEC 1833, 243-44; III.B.12, LORENZO SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, 17 SEP 1884, 9, 11).

13 October 1826

Unclaimed letters for Joseph and Hyrum Smith are being held in the Palmyra Post Office (*Wayne Sentinel,* 13 October 1826).

November 1826-17 January 1827

According to Joseph Knight, Sr., Joseph Jr. worked for him in Colesville in November 1826 until the time of Joseph's marriage, 18 January 1827 (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 2).

2 November 1826

Hyrum Smith marries Jerusha Barden (L. Smith 1853, 40; I.H.3, SMITH FAMILY BIBLE RECORDS, NO DATES).

17 January 1827

Joseph Jr. travels from Colesville (NY) to Harmony (PA) with Joseph Knight's horse and cutter and takes Emma along while her father, Isaac Hale, attends church (VI.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 2; IV.D.10, WILLIAM R. HINE STATEMENT, CIRCA MAR 1885; V.A.1, ISAAC HALE STATEMENT, 1834). W. R. Hine says that this event took place on the Sunday before the marriage (14 January), but more likely Hale was attending Methodist class on Wednesday, 17 January (see Newell and Avery 1984, 312, n. 3). It has been suggested that Emma perhaps stayed the night with her sister Elizabeth Wasson who lived near Joseph Knight in Colesville (NY) (Grant 1960, 338).

18 January 1827

Joseph Jr. and Emma Hale are married in South Bainbridge (NY) by Squire Tarbell (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 8; I.H.1, SMITH FAMILY GENEALOGY, 1834, 9).

19-29 January 1827

"Immediately" after their marriage, and with the help of Josiah Stowell, Joseph and Emma leave South Bainbridge for Manchester (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 8; IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 2). Lucy Smith says that Emma and Joseph arrived at Manchester in January 1827 (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:58). The high-end date for their departure is calculated by subtracting a minimal two-day trip from the last day of month.

10 March 1827

Joseph Jr. pays $4.00 to Abraham Fish's account at the store of Joel and Levi Thayre in Palmyra (III.L.11, JOSEPH SMITH RECEIPT TO ABRAHAM FISH, 10 MAR 1827).

Circa 1 April 1827

The Smiths enter a two-year agreement with Lemuel Durfee and con-

tinue as renters on their former property (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:92; see also Circa 1 April 1829).

16 April 1827

Gain Robinson visits the Smiths and charges 50 cents for medicine (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830). On the same day, Samuel Harrison Smith agrees to work for Lemuel Durfee "by the Month ... 7 Months for the use of the place Where Said Joseph Smith lives" (III.L.10, LEMUEL DURFEE ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1827-1829; see also Circa 1 April 1827).

31 May 1827

Joseph (probably Sr.) and Hyrum incur debt for three barrels of cider (III.L.10, LEMUEL DURFEE ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1827-1829).

June 1827

Joseph Sr. tells Willard Chase about his son finding the golden plates and encountering a spirit (III.A.14, WILLARD CHASE STATEMENT, CIRCA 11 DEC 1833, 242-43).

26 June 1827

Joseph (probably Sr.) incurs a debt for a veal hind quarter (23 pounds for 69 cents) and forequarter (22 pounds at 55 cents) (III.L.10, LEMUEL DURFEE ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1827-1829).

16 July 1827

Joseph (probably Sr.) purchases painting materials for his wife at Cains Robinson's store (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

August 1827 (A)

The Smiths mow a field for Lemuel Durfee. Joseph Sr. works for three days, Joseph Jr. two days, and Hyrum one day (III.L.10, LEMUEL DURFEE ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1827-1829).

August 1827 (B)

Peter Ingersoll accompanies Joseph and Emma to Harmony (PA) to help move Emma's furniture to Manchester (NY). Isaac Hale confronts Joseph about stealing away his daughter. Joseph promises to give up money digging and stone gazing, and Isaac promises to help Joseph and Emma get established in Harmony (III.L.9, PETER INGERSOLL STATEMENT, 2 DEC 1833; V.A.1, ISAAC HALE STATEMENT, 1834).

1 September 1827

Joseph (probably Sr.) and Hyrum incur debt for two barrels of cider (III.L.10, LEMUEL DURFEE ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1827-1829).

16 September 1827

Hyrum's daughter Lovina is born (I.H.3, SMITH FAMILY BIBLE RECORDS, NO DATES; L. Smith 1853, 42).

18 September 1827

Joseph Sr. buys lampblack and other painting materials ($2.44) for his "son" (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

20 September 1827

Lucy Smith says Joseph Knight and Josiah Stowell arrived at her home on 20 September 1827 and remained several days (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:60).

22 September 1827 (A)

Joseph Jr. obtains the golden plates from the hill during the early morning hours on Saturday, 22 September 1827 (I.A.7, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 5; I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 8; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:60-61). Katharine Smith says that Joseph got the plates at 2 a.m. (I.E.2, KATHARINE SMITH SALISBURY TO DEAR SISTERS, 10 MAR 1886); Benjamin Saunders says midnight (III.J.24, ORSON SAUNDERS ACCOUNT, 1893). The plates are not brought home but are left hidden in the woods.

22 September 1827 (B)

Lucy sends Joseph Jr. to a cabinet maker, probably Willard Chase, to make a chest in which to put the plates (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:62). Chase says this occurred in the "fore part" of September (III.A.14, WILLARD CHASE STATEMENT, CIRCA 11 DEC 1833, 245), perhaps unaware that there was a gap between when Smith removed the plates from the hill and when he took them home; Chase assumed Smith had approached him before 22 September.

23 September 1827

Joseph Jr. goes to Macedon to work for widow Wells (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:62; III.A.14, WILLARD CHASE STATEMENT, CIRCA 11 DEC 1833, 246).

23/30 September 1827

Lorenzo Saunders and others go to the Manchester hill in an attempt to

locate the hole from which Smith might have taken the plates but cannot find one (III.J.20, LORENZO SAUNDERS TO THOMAS GREGG, 28 JAN 1885; III.D.9, LORENZO SAUNDERS STATEMENT, 21 JUL 1887). Saunders refers to "the next Sunday" and "the Sunday following" the removal of the plates, but considering the sequence of events, he may have meant 30 September.

24-27 September 1827 (A)

Joseph Sr. spies on a neighbor, Samuel Lawrence, and others and discovers that they have hired a conjuror to find the plates. Emma is sent to retrieve Joseph Jr. from Macedon. Joseph Jr. goes into the woods to get the plates from their hiding place and on his return is attacked and dislocates his thumb (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS: 63-66; III.F.10, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEW WITH JOEL TIFFANY, 1859, 166-67). Josiah Stowell said he was the "first person" who took the plates out of Smith's hands "the morning [he] brought them in" (IV.B.2, MARTHA CAMPBELL TO JOSEPH SMITH, 19 DEC 1843). William and Katharine Smith lifted and felt them through an old frock coat (I.D.4, WILLIAM SMITH, *ON MORMONISM,* 1883, 12; I.E.3, HERBERT S. SALISBURY REMINISCENCES, 1945 & 1954). Willard Chase said Smith worked in Macedon about ten days before Emma went after him (III.A.14, WILLARD CHASE STATEMENT, CIRCA 11 DEC 1833, 246), but Lucy Smith says it was only "a little while" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:62) or the "next day" before he returned (1853:102). Knight said that he and Stowell stayed in Manchester "several days" (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 2). Considering that they arrived on 20 September (see above) and were preparing to leave on the morning of the 22nd, it seems unlikely that Stowell and Knight would still be at the Smith home ten days later. The low-end date is determined by adding a minimum of one day in Macedon. The high-end date is derived by subtracting three days from the end of the month when Smith hides the plates in his father's cooper shop "a few days after" bringing them home (see 24-30 September 1827).

24-27 September 1827 (B)

Alvah Beaman, who was visiting the Smiths from Lavonia (NY), helps hide the plates under the hearth (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:67-68; III.F.10, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEW WITH JOEL TIFFANY, 1859, 166-67; III.K.12, MARY A. NOBLE AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1834-1836; IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 3).

24-30 September 1827

Joseph Jr. hides the plates across the road in the cooper's shop. During the night the box is found and destroyed by enemies. Smith explains that he had removed the plates from the box and placed them in the loft. Lucy Smith says that this event occurred "a few days after" Joseph brought the plates home, and Martin Harris says it was before 1 October (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:68-69; III.F.10, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEW WITH JOEL TIFFANY, 1859, 167).

Late September-November 1827

Joseph works with his father on the Manchester farm (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:67).

Circa 1 October 1827

Martin Harris learns from his brother Preserved Harris about Joseph Jr.'s discovery (III.F.10, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEW WITH JOEL TIFFANY, 1859, 167-68).

Fall 1827 (after 1 October)

Martin Harris tells Egbert B. Grandin and John H. Gilbert about Smith's discovery of golden plates and "spectacles" (III.H.10, JOHN H. GILBERT MEMORANDUM, 8 SEP 1892, 4). Harris may have also discussed the matter with John A. Clark about this time (III.F.1, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEWS WITH JOHN A. CLARK, 1827 & 1828).

Early October 1827

Joseph Jr. sends his mother to request Martin Harris's help. Eventually Joseph meets with Harris and his wife (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:70-71; III.F.10, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEW WITH JOEL TIFFANY, 1859, 168).

5 October 1827

Unclaimed letters for Joseph Jr., Samuel Harrison, and "Smith & Co." are being held in the post office (*Wayne Sentinel,* 5 October 1827; the last letter is dated 1 October 1827).

Circa November 1827

Joseph Smith's brother-in-law, Alvah Hale, arrives in Manchester (NY) to help him and Emma move to Harmony (I.A.7, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 5; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:72-73). Martin Harris gives Smith $50 in a tavern, with Hale as a witness (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 9; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HIS-

TORY, 1845, MS:73). Joseph Knight says the $50 was given in November (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 3).

1-23 December 1827

Joseph and Emma Smith and Alva Hale leave Manchester (NY). Joseph says they left in December (I.A.7, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 5) when he was twenty-one, perhaps indicating a departure before his twenty-second birthday on 23 December (I.A.10, JOSEPH SMITH TO OLIVER COWDERY, DEC 1834). Lucy Smith has December (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:73). But Martin Harris says they left on a Saturday night about the last of October or first of November (III.F.10, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEW WITH JOEL TIFFANY, 1859, 170). Joseph Knight implies that the Smiths left in November (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 3). Peter Ingersoll says it took place in the fall of 1827 (III.A.9, PETER INGERSOLL STATEMENT, 2 DEC 1827). The plates were transported in a barrel of beans (e.g., I.A.17, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, 1840, 13-14).

Circa mid-December 1827

Joseph, Emma, and Alvah Hale arrive in Harmony (PA). Joseph and Emma live briefly with Isaac Hale, who forbids Joseph from keeping the plates in his house (I.A.7, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 5).

Circa late December 1828

Shortly before 2 January 1828, Joseph and Emma move into a small house formerly occupied by Jesse Hale (V.E.4, HARMONY [PA] ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1828-1831; V.E.5, JOSEPH SMITH HARMONY [PA] LAND RECORDS, 1828-1833). The land assessment taken between 3 December 1827 and 2 January 1828 indicates that Smith was taxed $10 for his home and another $10 for a cow.

Circa late December 1827-12 April 1828

Joseph Smith begins dictating his translation to his wife sometime after their arrival in Harmony in December 1827 and before Martin Harris becomes the scribe on 12 April 1828 (I.F.1, EMMA SMITH BIDAMON INTERVIEW WITH EDMUND C. BRIGGS, 1856). Joseph Knight says that Emma wrote for Joseph "through the winter" (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 4). Emma's brother Reuben may have also helped as a scribe during this time (e.g.,

I.F.3, EMMA SMITH BIDAMON INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH SMITH III, FEB 1879, 289).

December 1827-February 1828

Joseph Jr. says that he copied "a considerable number" of the characters from the plates and "translated some of them" between December 1827 and February 1828 (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 9; V.E.2, BOOK OF MORMON CHARACTERS, DEC 1827-FEB 1828).

30 December 1827

Sophronia Smith marries Calvin Stoddard in Palmyra (NY) (*Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine,* October 1935, 150; I.H.3, SMITH FAMILY BIBLE RECORDS, NO DATES). Lucy Smith misdates the marriage to 2 December 1827 (L. Smith 1853, 39).

Circa January 1828

Joseph Sr. and Lucy visit Martin Harris and wife "in the early part of the winter in 1828." During this visit, they explain that Joseph Jr. wants to visit Manchester (NY) and needs money for the coach (III.A.6, ABIGAIL HARRIS STATEMENT, 28 NOV 1833).

29 January 1828

Joseph Sr. purchases "Calomel" for his wife at Gain Robinson's store (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

February 1828

Martin Harris takes a sheet of paper with characters copied from the Book of Mormon to eastern scholars, including Charles Anthon of Columbia University in New York City. Harris visits Harmony (PA) briefly, then returns home (I.A.7, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 5; I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 9). John H. Gilbert says that on the way to New York City, Harris stopped in Albany to see Lt. Governor Bradish (III.H.10, JOHN H. GILBERT MEMORANDUM, 8 SEP 1892). W. W. Phelps says that Harris went to Utica, Albany, and New York City (III.I.2, WILLIAM W. PHELPS TO E. D. HOWE, 15 JAN 1831). Lucy says that her son Hyrum accompanied Harris on his initial visit to Harmony (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:73).

Circa February-March 1828

Lucy Harris accompanies her husband, Martin Harris, on a two-week stay in Harmony (PA). She searches Smith's house and the nearby woods for the plates (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:74-75). This

visit apparently took place "in the winter time" when snow was still on the ground (perhaps in February or early March).

1 February 1828

Joseph (probably Sr.) is credited $3.25 to his account with Gain Robinson (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAIN C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

Circa March 1828

Upon returning to Palmyra, Martin Harris and wife visit Abigail Harris, who reported that Lucy strongly disbelieved Smith's claims, while Martin expressed the hope of making money from the Book of Mormon project (III.A.6, ABIGAIL HARRIS STATEMENT, 28 NOV 1833).

12 April 1828

Martin Harris arrives in Harmony (PA) and works as Smith's scribe until about 14 June (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 9).

13 May 1828

Joseph Sr. and Samuel Smith incur a $3.38 debt for three barrels of cider (III.L.10, LEMUEL DURFEE ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1827-1829).

9 June 1828

Hyrum Smith apparently purchases a cow from Cains Robinson for $16.75; also on this day, Gain Robinson may have extracted a tooth for Hyrum (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

Circa 14 June 1828

Martin Harris pressures Joseph Smith for permission to return to Palmyra (NY) with the translation manuscript. After asking God three times, Smith allows Harris to take about 116 pages of manuscript (I.A.7, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 5-6; I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY 1839, 9-10). While Smith's 1839 history has the 14th—the day before Emma gave birth—Lucy Smith says that Harris was gone about a week before Emma gave birth (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:118; MS:79).

15 June 1828

Emma Smith gives birth, but her infant son dies the same day (V.E.3, INFANT'S GRAVESTONE, 15 JUN 1828; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:79). The Smiths name their infant Alvin (I.H.3, SMITH FAMILY BIBLE RECORDS, NO DATES). Sophia Lewis,

who was present at the birth, says the infant was "still-born and very much deformed" (V.A.5, SOPHIA LEWIS STATEMENT, 1834).

Circa 15 June 1829-29 June 1829

Lucy Smith says Joseph attended to his sick wife for "two weeks" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:80, 1853:118).

18 June 1828

Hyrum and Samuel Smith hoe one day each for Lemuel Durfee (III.L.10, LEMUEL DURFEE ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1827-1829).

20 June 1828

Joseph Sr. and Samuel incur a $3.38 debt for three barrels of cider (III.L.10, LEMUEL DURFEE ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1827-1829).

Circa 25 June 1828

Joseph Jr. joins a Methodist class in Harmony for three days. According to Joseph and Hiel Lewis, Joseph Smith joined on a Wednesday afternoon in June 1828 at their father Nathaniel Lewis's house (V.A.6, JOSEPH AND HIEL LEWIS STATEMENTS, 1879, under 30 April 1879). If the Lewises are correct about the date, his involvement with the Methodists would have likely followed the death of his infant son on 15 June, thus making the 18th or 25th (Wednesdays) probable dates, the latter being more likely due to Emma's illness. It is also possible that the Lewises were mistaken about the date and that this event occurred in early July after Smith's return from Manchester when he had learned of the loss of the translation manuscript (see early July 1828).

Circa 28 June 1828

Joseph Smith withdraws from the Harmony (PA) Methodist class on a Sunday, according to Joseph and Hiel Lewis, perhaps either 21 or 28 June, the latter being more likely (V.A.6, JOSEPH AND HIEL LEWIS STATEMENTS, 1879, under 11 June 1879; see also 25 June 1828). While the Lewises say that Smith was on the class books three days, Michael Morse, the class leader and Smith's brother-in law, believed his name was in the book for six months, perhaps from June to November 1828 (see V.A.6, JOSEPH AND HIEL LEWIS STATEMENTS, 1879, n. 22).

7 July 1828

Joseph Sr. and "Rockwell"—probably Orin, father of Orrin Porter Rockwell—hoe three days for Lemuel Durfee (III.L.10, LEMUEL DURFEE ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1827-1829).

Early July 1828 (A)

Joseph Jr. visits his family in Manchester; Martin Harris confesses that he lost the translation manuscript (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 10; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:80-84). Lucy Smith says that Joseph left Harmony "two weeks" after the death of his infant son (15 June) and "nearly three weeks" after Martin Harris's departure (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:118, MS:79). She says that Joseph stayed in Manchester only one day (1853:122).

Early July 1828 (B)

Joseph returns to Harmony, where the angel takes back the plates and Joseph loses the seer's gift for a time (I.A.7, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 6; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:87). Smith says that the angel returned the urim and thummim to him "immediately" upon his return from Manchester and that he received a revelation condemning Harris (D&C 3), then both the plates and urim and thummim were again taken.

Early July 1828 (C)

Joseph's history says that the plates were returned to him after "a few days" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 10). However, Lucy Smith claimed that they were returned to him on 22 September 1828 (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:89, 94, 1853:125), while David Whitmer said they were returned after three months (VI.A.30, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH J. M. HUBBLE, NOV 1886, 5). Joseph says that he "did not however go immediately to translating, but went to laboring with my hands upon a small farm ... in order to provide for my family." Still, by the time Lucy and Joseph Sr. visited in early September (see Circa early September 1828), some translation had been done, with Emma as scribe.

12 July 1828

Joseph Sr. is credited 87 cents to his account with Cains Robinson (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

19 July 1828

Joseph Sr. incurs a $1.75 debt with Cains Robinson for painting materials (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

20 July 1828

Lemuel Durfee credits Joseph Sr. and Samuel Smith for work binding

wheat, noting that William worked one day and Samuel three (III.L.10, LEMUEL DURFEE ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1827-1829).

22 July 1828

Joseph Sr. incurs a $2.00 debt with Cains Robinson for painting materials for his "son" (Hyrum?) (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

Circa July 1828

Hyrum tells Orlando and Lorenzo Saunders that it is his last time to work in the fields since he will be taking up Mormonism and Joseph will be the richest man in the country (III.B.15, LORENZO SAUNDERS INTERVIEW, 12 NOV 1884, 5).

7 August 1828

Lemuel Durfee notes that Rockwell—probably Orin, father of Orrin Porter Rockwell—mowed two days and Samuel Smith three days (III.L.10, LEMUEL DURFEE ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1827-1829).

20 August 1828

Joseph Sr. incurs a 50-cent debt with Cains Robinson for painting materials (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

Circa early September 1828

Joseph Sr. and Lucy Smith visit Joseph Jr. and Emma in Harmony (PA). Lucy says that this visit occurred about two months after Joseph Jr.'s visit to Manchester in early July and shortly after the plates were returned to Joseph, which she believed happened on 22 September 1828 (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:86-87). Circumstantial evidence suggests that Lucy returned to Manchester in early September (see Circa 11 September 1828).

Circa September 1828

The Presbyterian records indicate that as of March 1830, Lucy, Hyrum, and Samuel had been inactive at least eighteen months, circa September 1828 (III.L.20, PALMYRA [NY] PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH RECORDS, MAR 1830).

Circa 11 September 1828

This is the probable date for Lucy's and Joseph Sr.'s return to Manchester. Lucy says that upon their return, they found Samuel and Sophronia "very sick" (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:90). If Joseph Sr.'s purchase of medicine for Samuel relates to Lucy's account, then

their return to Manchester pre-dates 11 September 1828 (see below). Lucy reports that soon after their return, Oliver Cowdery came to live with them (ibid., 1853:128).

11 September 1828

Joseph Sr. incurs a 15-cent debt with Gain Robinson for medicine for his son Samuel (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

Circa December 1828 (A)

The Harmony land assessment for 1829 is taken (V.E.4, HARMONY [PA] ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1828-1831; V.E.5, JOSEPH SMITH HARMONY [PA] LAND RECORDS, 1828-1833). For the first time, Joseph Jr. is assessed $14 for one acre of first-rate, $48 for six acres of second-rate, and $24 for six acres of third-rate improved land. Although the entire thirteen-acre farm was considered improved, the owner had only one acre under cultivation. Joseph's house was assessed at $10 and his cow at $9. The initial appraisal totaled $105, but someone evidently questioned this, and it was subsequently raised to $263. This action transferred six acres of third-rate improved and thirty-four acres of unimproved land, assessed at $150, from Isaac Hale's assessment to Smith's.

Circa December 1828 (B)

Joseph Jr. leaves Harmony (PA) to visit Joseph Knight in Colesville (NY) to ask for financial help. According to Knight, this occurred the "first of the winter 1828" (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 5).

1 January 1829

Joseph Sr. is credited 37 cents to his account with Gain Robinson (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

January/February 1829

Joseph Sr. and Abraham Fish incur a $37.50 debt with Lemuel Durfee (III.L.18, LEMUEL DURFEE PROBATE PAPERS, 1830).

February 1829

On way to Harmony, Joseph Sr. and Samuel Smith stop in Colesville (NY) to see Joseph Knight, who takes them the rest of the way in his sleigh. Knight gives Joseph Sr. fifty cents and Joseph Jr. an unspecified amount of money for writing paper (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 5). Joseph Jr. receives a revelation

(D&C 4) for his father (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 11). Joseph Knight acts as a juror at a series of Chenango, Broome County (NY) trials, 10-11 February 1829 (Israel Dwight vs. Kelsus Heath, Ebenezer B. Green vs. Mathinsalim Hasbroack, and Mathinsalim Hasbroack vs. Jonathan Ogden, Judicial Records, Broome County Historical Society, Binghamton, New York).

Circa February-March 1829

Emma Smith and her brother-in-law Samuel Smith act as scribes for Joseph (I.A.7, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1832, 6; I.F.3, EMMA SMITH BIDAMON INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH SMITH III, FEB 1879, 1:289). A revelation (D&C 5:30) indicates that some translating had been done previously in March 1829 (see Mid-late March 1829).

11 March 1829

Hyrum Smith incurs a 50-cent debt with Gain Robinson for medicine and a visit (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830; see also 25 March 1829).

Circa mid-March 1829

Lucy Harris brings suit against Joseph Jr. at Lyons (NY), during which Martin Harris and others testify. Case dismissed (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS: 95-97; III.F.15, MARTIN HARRIS TESTIMONY, 8 SEP 1870). Martin Harris said that the trial was held in "March [1829]" prior to his trip to Harmony with a Mr. Rogers later the same month. Lucy Smith misdates this event to about August 1829 but clearly places it in a setting prior to Joseph's move to Fayette about the end of May 1829.

Mid-late March 1829

Martin Harris visits Joseph Smith in Harmony (PA) with a Mr. Rogers from Waterloo and requests to see the plates (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 11-13; III.F.15, MARTIN HARRIS TESTIMONY, 4 SEP 1870; V.A.1, ISAAC HALE STATEMENT, 1834). Smith receives a revelation (D&C 5) for Harris, which mentions the translation being done at that time, including: "when thou hast translated a few more pages thou shalt stop for a season" (D&C 5:30).

25 March 1829

Hyrum Smith incurs a 75-cent debt with Gain Robinson for medicine and a visit to his sick wife (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

26 March 1829

Hyrum Smith incurs a 25-cent debt with Gain Robinson (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

Late March 1829

Joseph Knight and his wife visit the Smiths in Harmony (PA) in the "Last of March [1829]" (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 5).

Circa 1 April 1829

Oliver Cowdery and Samuel Smith leave Manchester for Harmony (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:93). After their departure, the Smiths move from the frame house to the log cabin with Hyrum and his family. Apparently the Smiths' two-year lease with Lemuel Durfee had expired and was not renewed (see Circa 1 April 1827).

2-3 April 1829

Oliver Cowdery and Samuel Smith visit the Whitmers in Fayette (NY). Cowdery had met David Whitmer while the latter was visiting Palmyra in 1828. Before leaving, Cowdery promised to write the Whitmers from Harmony (VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878; VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL*, 1 JUN 1881).

5 April 1829

Oliver Cowdery and Samuel Smith arrive in Harmony near sunset on a Sunday (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 13; III.G.6, OLIVER COWDERY TO W. W. PHELPS, 7 SEP 1834, 14).

6 April 1829

Oliver Cowdery helps Joseph Smith with "arranging some business of a temporal nature" (III.G.6, OLIVER COWDERY TO W. W. PHELPS, 7 SEP 1834, 14). Joseph signs a land agreement with Isaac Hale, with Oliver Cowdery and Samuel Smith acting as witnesses. Joseph agrees to pay Hale a total of $200 for the property—$114 by 1 May 1829 and $86 on 1 May 1830—and makes a down-payment of $64 (V.E.5, JOSEPH SMITH HARMONY [PA] LAND RECORDS, 1828-1833).

7 April 1829

Joseph Smith commences translation with Oliver Cowdery as scribe (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 13-15; III.G.6, OLIVER COWDERY TO W. W. PHELPS, 7 SEP 1834, 14).

Early-mid April 1829

Joseph Smith receives a revelation (D&C 6) for Oliver Cowdery in which Cowdery's private thoughts are apparently revealed. Smith says that D&C 6 was received after "having continued [translating] for some time" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 13). The revelation itself implies that the translation had already begun: "the words or the work which thou hast been writing are true" (D&C 6:17).

Early-mid April 1829

Oliver Cowdery writes to David Whitmer soon after his arrival in Harmony (PA) and mentions that Smith was able to read his private thoughts (VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878; VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881).

Mid-late April 1829

Through revelation (D&C 7), Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery settle a dispute about the ancient apostle John (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 15-16).

Late April 1829

Oliver Cowdery seeks the gift of translation, and "[w]hilst continuing the work of translation during the month of April," Smith receives two revelations encouraging him (D&C 8, 9). Cowdery fails in his attempt (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 16-17).

27 April 1829

Joseph Smith pays Isaac Hale $50 toward purchase of the Harmony land, fulfilling the requirement to pay $114 by 1 May 1829 (V.E.5, JOSEPH SMITH HARMONY [PA] LAND RECORDS, 1828-1833).

Late April/early May 1829

Oliver Cowdery writes a second letter to David Whitmer, this time quoting a few lines of the translation (VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881).

15 May 1829

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery baptize one another in the Susquehanna River. Smith and Cowdery later say that their baptisms were preceded by angelic ordination (e.g., III.G.6, OLIVER COWDERY TO W. W. PHELPS, 7 SEP 1834, 15-16), and Smith identifies the angel as John the Baptist (D&C 27:8; I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 17-18). Cowdery says their baptisms took place "[a]fter writing the ac-

count given of the Savior's ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob, upon this continent [i.e., 3 Nephi 11-28]." Lucy Smith mentions only that Smith and Cowdery were commanded through the stone to baptize one another (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:94), and David Whitmer and William E. McLellin said they knew nothing about angelic ordinations until about 1834 (VI.A.24, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ZENAS H. GURLEY, 14 JAN 1885; VI.A.F.10, WILLIAM E. MCLELLIN TO JOSEPH SMITH III, JUL 7 SEP 1872).

25 May 1829

Samuel Smith visits Harmony (he may have never left) and is baptized on 25 May 1829 (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 19). Lucy Smith says that Samuel was baptized on the same day as Joseph and Oliver, 15 May (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:94). Soon after, Samuel returns to Manchester (NY).

Late May 1829 (A)

Joseph Knight visits Harmony (PA) with supplies. Smith receives a revelation (D&C 12) for Knight (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 20-21; IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 6). The visit, according to Smith's history, occurred "about the same time" as Hyrum's visit (see below); however, Knight does not mention Hyrum but states that Samuel was living with Smith.

Late May 1829 (B)

Hyrum Smith visits Harmony (PA) "not many days" after Samuel's baptism and Joseph receives a revelation (D&C 11) for him (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 19-20). Hyrum leaves without being baptized.

Late May 1829 (C)

Joseph receives a revelation (D&C 10) concerning the lost portion of the translation (May 1829, according to the heading in the Book of Commandments). This revelation is believed to have been received as Smith prepared to move to Fayette (NY), where he apparently began dictating the opening portions of the Book of First Nephi.

Late May 1829 (D)

Cowdery writes a third letter from Harmony (PA) requesting David Whitmer's assistance in moving to Fayette (VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN

1881; VI.A.17, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEWS WITH JAMES H. HART, 21 AUG 1883 & 10 MAR 1884).

Circa 1 June 1829

David Whitmer arrives in Harmony (PA) to escort Smith and Cowdery to his father's farm in Fayette (NY) (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 21-22; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:100). Whitmer says he first met Smith in June 1829 (VI.A.14, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* 14 OCT 1881), which is corroborated by Smith, who says it was in the "beginning of the month of June" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 21).

Circa 4 June 1829

David Whitmer, Joseph Smith, and Oliver Cowdery arrive at the Peter Whitmer, Sr., farm in Fayette (NY), where the remainder of the translation is completed. Whitmer said it was a two-and-a-half-day trip and that they arrived "sometime in June 1829" (VI.A.29, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *OMAHA* [NE] *HERALD,* 10 OCT 1886; VI.A.24, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ZENAS H. GURLEY, 14 JAN 1885, 2). If Whitmer met Smith in June (see above), the earliest possible arrival date is the 4th. Whitmer said Emma Smith followed her husband to Fayette "a short time after" (VI.A.17, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEWS WITH JAMES H. HART, 21 AUG 1883 & 10 MAR 1884).

Circa 5 June 1829

The translation is recommenced the day after Smith's arrival in Fayette (NY). David Whitmer said this was about 1 June 1829, but this was apparently an approximation since he also said he first met Smith in June (VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881; VI.A.14, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* 14 OCT 1881). Besides Oliver Cowdery, John and Christian Whitmer are said to have served as scribes for Smith (e.g., VI.A.14, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *CHICAGO TIMES,* 14 OCT 1881; I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 22).

Circa 5-8 June 1829 (A)

David, John, and Peter Whitmer receive revelations (D&C 14, 15, and 16) through Joseph Smith (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 22-23). This would have occurred after Smith's arrival and before application was made for the Book of Mormon copyright (see 11 June 1829), but probably within a few days.

Circa 5-8 June 1829 (B)

Joseph Smith baptizes Hyrum Smith and David Whitmer, and Cowdery baptizes Peter Whitmer, Jr., in Seneca Lake (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 23). Whitmer says he was baptized, confirmed, and ordained an elder in June 1829 (VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 32). It seems likely that these baptisms would have occurred shortly after Smith's arrival, although David Whitmer said he was baptized in the "middle of June 1829" (see VI.A.31, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 2 JAN 1887). John Whitmer may have been baptized at this time (see L. Cook 1981, 25).

Circa 9-10 June 1829

Joseph Jr., and possibly others, arrive in Manchester (NY) to negotiate and arrange for the printing of the Book of Mormon (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 34). Joseph Smith and Martin Harris visit Grandin's printing establishment. Grandin declines their first proposal (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 26, 34; III.H.8, JOHN H. GILBERT STATEMENT, 23 OCT 1887; III.H.10, JOHN H. GILBERT MEMORANDUM, 8 SEP 1892). Smith then seeks a printer in Rochester, visiting anti-Masonic editor Thurlow Weed who also declines the offer (III.K.17, THURLOW WEED REMINISCENCES, 1854, 1858, 1880, & 1884). According to Pomeroy Tucker, Smith's application to Weed occurred "immediately" after the visit to Grandin (III. J.8, POMEROY TUCKER ACCOUNT, 1867, 52). A "few days" later, Smith again visits Weed, bringing Harris with him, but Weed again declines. Smith apparently also visited Quaker Elihu F. Marshall of Rochester, who may have given a positive response (III.K.17, THURLOW WEED REMINISCENCES, 1854, 1858, 1880, & 1884; III.J.5, POMEROY TUCKER REMINISCENCE, 1858). Returning to Grandin's office, Harris tells Grandin that the book could be printed in Rochester should he refuse and then promises to mortgage his farm as collateral for the publication. Grandin agrees. Assisted by John H. Gilbert, Grandin estimates that the cost of printing 5,000 books will be about $3,000 (III.H.8, JOHN H. GILBERT STATEMENT, 23 OCT 1887; III.H.10, JOHN H. GILBERT MEMORANDUM, 8 SEP 1892). Smith's 1839 history places these events out of historical sequence after the testimonies of the three and eight witnesses, which occurred near the end of June 1829. Gilbert said the negotiations for printing occurred in the "forepart" of June 1829.

4-17 June 1829

Joseph Smith (probably Sr.) and Rockwell (probably Orin, father of

Orrin Porter Rockwell) incur a debt of $2.50 for two barrels of cider (III.L.10, LEMUEL DURFEE ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1827-1829), perhaps purchased for a gathering at the Smith residence during Joseph Jr.'s visit in the early part of the month. Entries before and after indicate that the charge was recorded between 4 and 17 June 1829.

11 June 1829

The Book of Mormon copyright is secured at the office of Richard R. Lansing in Utica (NY), perhaps by Joseph Jr. on his return to Fayette from Palmyra where he had just concluded negotiations with Egbert B. Grandin to print the Book of Mormon (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 34; III.L.12, BOOK OF MORMON COPYRIGHT, 11 JUN 1829). Smith's history places this event out of its historical sequence after the testimonies of the three and eight witnesses, which occurred near the end of June 1829. The history draft reverses the order so that the copyright is sought after negotiations with the printer are concluded (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 34, DRAFT:9).

Circa 11-14 June 1829 (A)

Joseph Smith returns to Fayette after obtaining the Book of Mormon copyright (see 11 June 1829) and shortly before Cowdery writes his letter to Hyrum Smith on 14 June (see 14 June 1829). The dictation of the Book of Mormon is resumed, probably not yet as far as 2 Nephi 27:12 which mentions the need for three witnesses.

Circa 11-14 June 1829 (B)

Joseph Smith receives "the word of the Lord ... in the chamber" of Peter Whitmer, Sr.'s, house in Fayette (NY) commanding Smith and Cowdery to ordain one another elders (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 26-27; I.A.21, JOSEPH SMITH TO THE CHURCH, 6 SEP 1842, 936). Smith's history defers these ordinations until the church could meet as a body (i.e., 6 April 1830); David Whitmer said he was ordained an elder by Joseph Smith the "last of June [1829]" (VI.A.31, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 2 JAN 1887; VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *Address,* 1887, 32).

Circa 11-14 June 1829 (C)

In a revelation (D&C 18) received in Fayette (NY), David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery are referred to as apostles and are told to name twelve others to the office of apostle (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 27-29; received on or before Cowdery's letter of 14 June 1829, L. Cook 1981, 29).

14 June 1829

Oliver Cowdery writes from Fayette to Hyrum Smith in Manchester and expresses his "anxious" feeling about Hyrum's "steadfastness" in his calling (D&C 11). He thanks Mrs. Rockwell for shoes, instructs Hyrum to prepare the people of Manchester for the gospel, and expresses a desire to visit Manchester soon (III.G.1, OLIVER COWDERY TO HYRUM SMITH, 14 JUN 1829). The wording of the letter is influenced by D&C 18 (see Circa 11-14 June 1829 [C]).

Circa 14-30 June 1829

Oliver Cowdery receives a revelation about building up the church (III.G.4, OLIVER COWDERY REVELATION, 1829). The exact date is not given, but it was "Written in the year of our Lord & Saviour 1829." Since the document seems dependent on D&C 18, the revelation probably dates to June 1829 or soon thereafter.

17 June 1829

From St. Lawrence County (NY), Joseph Sr.'s oldest brother, Jesse, responds to a letter from Hyrum Smith. Jesse expresses disbelief in the story of the gold plates. According to Jesse, Hyrum's letter reported that Joseph Sr. was suffering from a "nervous affection" (I.G.1, JESSE SMITH TO HYRUM SMITH, 17 JUN 1829). George A. Smith reported that both Joseph Sr. and Joseph Jr. had written to Joseph Sr.'s eighty-four-year-old father, Asael, in the fall of 1828 (I.G.4, GEORGE A. SMITH REMINISCENCES, CIRCA 1846, 1857, & CIRCA 1858).

26 June 1829

The *Wayne Sentinel* publishes the Book of Mormon title page and mentions that the book will be published as soon as it is finished (III.E.1, *WAYNE SENTINEL,* 1824-1836, under 26 June 1829).

27 June 1829

Mary, daughter of Hyrum Smith, is born (L. Smith 1853, 42).

Circa 27 June 1829

Lucy Smith says that when the translation of the Book of Mormon was completed, she went with her husband and Martin Harris to Fayette (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:100). However, David Whitmer says that the three witnesses saw the plates shortly before the translation was completed (VI.A.18, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE Q. CANNON, 27 FEB 1884; see also late June-1 July 1829).

Circa 28 June 1829 (A)

Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris express a desire to become special witnesses to the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith receives a revelation (D&C 17) in Fayette promising them a view of the plates if they are faithful and explaining their duty to testify to the world (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 23-24).

Circa 28 June 1829 (B)

Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris are shown the plates by an angel (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 24-25; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:101). David Whitmer said the event occurred in the "latter part" of June 1829 (VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878; VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881; VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 32). Whitmer told Edward Stevenson that the vision occurred on a "Sunday" about 11:00 a.m., perhaps 28 June (VI.A.5, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 22-23 DEC 1877; and VI.A.27, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD STEVENSON, 9 FEB 1886). Whitmer also said he was shown the plates "shortly before the completion of the translation when but a few pages left" (VI.A.18, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE Q. CANNON, 27 FEB 1884).

Circa 29 June 1829

Lucy, Joseph Sr., and Martin Harris return to Manchester (NY) "the next day" after the experience of the three witnesses (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:102).

Circa 30 June 1829

According to David Whitmer, the translation is completed by 1 July 1829 (VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881) or in late June (VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 30).

Circa 1-2 July 1829

"[A] few days" after Lucy's return to Manchester (NY), Joseph Jr., Oliver Cowdery, and David, John, and Peter Whitmer arrive to make further arrangements with Grandin and Gilbert regarding how the typesetting and printing of the Book of Mormon would proceed (I.A.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:102).

Circa 2 July 1829

Eight witnesses see the plates in a grove near the Smiths' Manchester

(NY) residence. It is unclear if their experience is purely physical or visionary (see introduction to III.L.13, TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES, JUN 1829). Lucy says that the event occurred on a Thursday, perhaps 2 July (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:102), and David Whitmer says it was one or two days after the three witnesses saw the plates (VI.A.7, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH ORSON PRATT AND JOSEPH F. SMITH, 7-8 SEP 1878; VI.A.12, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *KANSAS CITY JOURNAL,* 1 JUN 1881).

Circa 5 July 1829 (A)

At the Smiths' Manchester cabin on "[t]he evening after the plates ... were shown to the eight witnesses, a meeting was held, when all the witnesses, as also Don Carlos bore testimony to the truth of the latter-day dispensation" (J. Smith 1948, 4:393).

Circa 5 July 1829 (B)

On "the ensuing Monday" after the eight witnesses saw the plates, perhaps 6 July, Joseph Jr. in company with Hyrum, Cowdery, and the Whitmers visited Grandin's office again regarding the typesetting and printing of the Book of Mormon (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:102-4; I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 34).

Circa 6 July 1829

The "next day," as Lucy remembers it, the Whitmers return to Fayette (NY), while Joseph Jr., Cowdery, and Peter Whitmer, Jr., remain in Palmyra/Manchester to continue overseeing preparations for printing the Book of Mormon (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS: 102-4; 1853: 141).

Circa 8 July 1829

Lucy says that Joseph Jr. returned to Grandin's office to draw up an agreement on a "Wednesday," perhaps 8 July considering the sequence of events (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:102-4).

August 1829

Preaching begins in August 1829 according to David Whitmer (VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 32).

8 August 1829

Lemuel Durfee, the Smith's landlord, dies (see III.L.4, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND RECORDS, 1820-1830).

Mid-August 1829

Joseph Smith writes the Book of Mormon preface (III.L.16, BOOK OF MORMON PREFACE, 1829), with reference for the first time to an exact page count for "116 pages" that were lost. Because the printer's manuscript is 116 pages for First Nephi through Words of Mormon, the replacement portion, it can be assumed that the number 116 came from the printer's manuscript rather than from the original manuscript. It was an approximation, in other words—an assumption that the original manuscript occupied about the same number of pages for the same period covered. It can be further assumed that Oliver Cowdery would have copied at least 116 pages of the manuscript for the printer before the preface was written. Cowdery probably began copying the manuscript near the beginning of July and apparently reached Alma 36 by 6 November 1829 (see III.G.2, OLIVER COWDERY TO JOSEPH SMITH, 6 NOV 1829). Averaging the number of pages per day, he would have copied 116 pages by about the beginning of August. Thus, since the first signature included the preface (see below), Joseph Smith probably wrote the preface shortly before the printer began setting type in mid-or late-August.[12]

25 August 1829

Martin Harris mortgages his farm to Egbert B. Grandin (III.L.14, MARTIN HARRIS MORTGAGE, 25 AUG 1829).

25-31 August 1829

The printing of the Book of Mormon begins, according to John H. Gilbert, "about the middle of August, 1829" (III.H.2, JOHN H. GILBERT TO JAMES T. COBB, 10 FEB 1879, 1; see also III.H.10, JOHN H. GILBERT MEMORANDUM, 8 SEP 1892, 3); however, it is also likely that it began only after Harris signed the mortgage on 25 August 1829.

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12. Royal Skousen has reported that the recently restored fragments from the original (not printer's) manuscript for Jacob 6 through Enos 1 are numbered 111 through 114 (Skousen 1992, 22). Since the corresponding pages from the printer's manuscript are numbered 107 through 111, it is unlikely that the Words of Mormon in the original manuscript concluded on page 116. Cowdery required five more pages, even in his condensed script, to bring the printer's manuscript from this point to the end of the Words of Mormon. These five pages alone would have brought the original manuscript to page 119 or 120 (see also Metcalfe 1993, 395, n. 1).

31 August 1829

Isaac Hussee and Peter Harris take an oath to appraise Lemuel Durfee's personal property. Their inventory of Durfee's estate lists an unpaid note by Joseph Smith, Sr., and Abraham Fish for $37.50, plus $1.42 interest, a total of $38.92 (III.L.19, NATHAN PIERCE DOCKET BOOK, 1830).

Late August-early September 1829

Egbert B. Grandin and Thomas McAuley begin printing the Book of Mormon (III.H.10, JOHN H. GILBERT MEMORANDUM, 8 SEP 1892, 4). Joseph Smith, Sr., Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and Stephen S. Harding are in Grandin's office when the title page is printed (III.J.15, STEPHEN S. HARDING TO THOMAS GREGG, FEB 1882, 52).

September 1829

Stephen S. Harding leaves Palmyra for the West, taking with him the first printed Book of Mormon title page. Harris and Cowdery accompany him to Rochester (III.J.15, STEPHEN S. HARDING TO THOMAS GREGG, FEB 1882, 49-50).

Late September 1829

Smith leaves Manchester (see 4 October 1829), Cowdery and Peter Whitmer, Jr., remaining behind to prepare the printer's copy of the Book of Mormon manuscript.

1-4 October 1829

On his return to Pennsylvania, Smith buys a horse from Josiah Stowell in South Bainbridge (NY) (I.A.1, JOSEPH SMITH TO OLIVER COWDERY, 22 OCT 1829, 1).

4 October 1829

Joseph arrives in Harmony (I.A.1, JOSEPH SMITH TO OLIVER COWDERY, 22 OCT 1829, 1).

8 October 1829

Oliver Cowdery purchases a large Bible from Grandin's book store in Palmyra for $3.75. It will later be used by Joseph Smith in his revision of the Bible (III.L.15, JOSEPH SMITH AND OLIVER COWDERY BIBLE INSCRIPTION, 8 OCT 1829).

22 October 1829

Joseph Smith writes from Harmony (PA) to Oliver Cowdery in Manchester (NY) mentioning that he bought a horse from Josiah Stowell and

requesting that someone come and pick it up (see early October 1829). He also reports that Stowell is planning to purchase $500 or $600 worth of Book of Mormon inventory when published (I.A.1, JOSEPH SMITH TO OLIVER COWDERY, 22 OCT 1829).

25 October 1829

Oliver Cowdery receives a letter from Thomas Marsh, a Massachusetts businessman who had recently visited Palmyra and discussed the Book of Mormon with Cowdery and others (III.G.2, OLIVER COWDERY TO JOSEPH SMITH, 6 NOV 1829, 8).

Circa 26-31 October 1829

Hyrum Smith and Martin Harris visit Fayette (NY), as mentioned in a letter to Joseph Smith from Oliver Cowdery (III.G.2, OLIVER COWDERY TO JOSEPH SMITH, 6 NOV 1829, 8).

Circa October/November 1829

Lucy Smith is visited by three men who, she says, were conspiring to destroy the Book of Mormon manuscript (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:105-110). Her account apparently conflates information belonging to a March 1830 visit from a Presbyterian committee appointed to investigate the Smiths' lack of attendance (see 10 March 1830).

6 November 1829

Oliver Cowdery writes from Manchester (NY) to Joseph Smith in Harmony (PA) that Martin Harris may pick up Smith's horse in 2-3 weeks, that the printing of Book of Mormon is progressing slowly, that Grandin has had trouble getting new type but that the printing should be finished by 1 February 1830; also that the manuscript has been copied as far as Alma 36 (III.G.2, OLIVER COWDERY TO JOSEPH SMITH, 6 NOV 1829).

9 December 1829

Abner Cole's *Palmyra Reflector* announces that it will publish selections from the Book of Mormon in future editions (see introduction to III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1829-1831). The *Reflector* was an anonymously published paper that made fun of local issues. Its debut edition appeared on 2 September 1829.

Circa 27 December 1829

Hyrum Smith and Oliver Cowdery discover Abner Cole in Grandin's print shop on a Sunday planning to publish extracts from the Book of

Mormon (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:111). It is decided that Joseph Sr. should go to Harmony to get Joseph Jr. (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:112; III.G.3, OLIVER COWDERY TO JOSEPH SMITH, 28 DEC 1829). This event occurred before Cowdery wrote his letter of 28 December (see 28 December 1829) and, at the earliest, on 6 December when Cole set the type for the 9 December issue of the *Reflector,* in which he promised to publish excerpts from the Book of Mormon. Cole published two more issues of his paper before including a Book of Mormon extract (1 Nephi 1:1-2:3) in the 2 January issue. He probably set the type for this issue on Sunday, 27 December, which is the most likely date of his confrontation with Hyrum. Extracts from the Book of Mormon continued to appear in the *Reflector* on 13 and 22 January 1830.

28 December 1829

Oliver Cowdery writes from Manchester (NY) to inform Joseph Jr. in Harmony (PA) that his father, Joseph Sr., will be coming to see him "directly," presumably as a result of the Cole difficulty (see above). Meanwhile, Cowdery is helping with the printing, perhaps setting type (III.G.3, OLIVER COWDERY TO JOSEPH SMITH, 28 DEC 1829; see also III.H.2, JOHN H. GILBERT TO JAMES T. COBB, 10 FEB 1879). The fact that Cole published Book of Mormon extracts in three issues of the *Reflector* (2, 13, and 22 January) may indicate that there was a delay in Joseph Sr.'s departure (see circa 20 January 1830).

Late December 1829

The typesetting is finished about the end of December, according to John H. Gilbert (III.H.10, JOHN H. GILBERT MEMORANDUM, 8 SEP 1892, 3, 4).

Circa January 1830

The Harmony (PA) land assessment is made (V.E.4, HARMONY [PA] ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1828-1831; V.E.5, JOSEPH SMITH HARMONY [PA] LAND RECORDS, 1828-1833). Joseph Jr. is assessed $14 for one acre of first-rate, $48 for six acres of second-rate, and $24 for six acres of third-rate improved land. He is assessed $10 for his house and $17 for two cows. The total assessment is $113. The $150 that was added in 1829 is transferred back to Isaac Hale.

2 January 1830

Abner Cole publishes the text of 1 Nephi 1:1-2:3 (see introduction to

III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1829-1831). Cole probably set type for this issue on 27 December 1829 (see above).

13 January 1830

Abner Cole publishes 1 Nephi 2:4-15 (see introduction to III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1829-1831), probably setting type on 10 January 1830.

16 January 1830 (A)

Joseph Smith, Sr., agrees to divide the revenue from Book of Mormon sales with Martin Harris (III.L.17, JOSEPH SMITH, SR., AND MARTIN HARRIS AGREEMENT, 16 JAN 1830). Oliver Cowdery signs as a witness. Harris assumed that he would pay Grandin $3,000 by 25 February 1831 (perhaps extended due to a delay in production) by selling half of the print run at $1.25 per book. According to the new arrangement, the entire print run would have to sell at that price in order to pay the debt.

16 January 1830 (B)

Joseph Sr. pays a 75-cent debt to Michael Eggleston, although indirectly by giving the money to an Eggleston creditor (III.L.5, GAIN C. AND CAINS C. ROBINSON ACCOUNT BOOKS, 1820-1830).

19 January 1830

Lemuel Durfee, Jr., enters a plea before Justice Nathan Pierce for judgement against Joseph Smith, Sr., and Abraham Fish for $39.92, both of whom sign a consent for the judge to enter judgement against them (III.L.19, NATHAN PIERCE DOCKET BOOK, 1830).

Circa 20 January 1830

Joseph Sr., leaves for Harmony (PA) to bring Joseph Jr. back to Palmyra/Manchester to settle the problem with Abner Cole (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:112). In order to return to Manchester on 24 January, the probable date of Joseph Jr.'s confrontation with Cole (see circa 24 January 1830), Joseph Sr. would have had to leave by 20 January for the four- or five-day round trip. Joseph Sr.'s departure from Manchester was evidently delayed (see 28 December 1829), allowing Cole to publish three extracts from the Book of Mormon on 2, 13, and 22 January 1830. Three possible reasons for the delay are: (1) weather conditions; (2) Joseph Sr.'s appearance before Justice Nathan Pierce on 19 January (see 19 January 1839); and (3) the possible reception of a letter from Joseph Jr. requesting a delay.

22 January 1830

Abner Cole publishes Alma 43:22-40 (see introduction to III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1829-1831). The jump from Nephi to Alma might indicate that through Hyrum's initiative, Grandin removed the uncut sheets of the Book of Mormon from his shop and Cole only had what Gilbert was currently typesetting or printing to draw from. Cole probably set type for this issue on Sunday, 17 January 1830.

Circa 24 January 1830

Joseph Sr. returns with Joseph Jr. to Palmyra/Manchester, perhaps also accompanied by Josiah Stowell and Joseph Knight (see circa 24 January-February 1830). Joseph Jr. visits Grandin's business and confronts Cole, evidently on Sunday (24 January); Lucy says "the same night" of his arrival (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:111-13). The last extract of the Book of Mormon had just appeared in the *Reflector* on 22 January 1830 (Friday); it therefore seems likely that the Smith-Cole confrontation occurred the following Sunday. If Lucy is correct that this happened the "same night" of Smith's arrival, then the previous Sunday (17 January) is ruled out because Joseph Sr. could not have been present the previous day to sign the agreement with Martin Harris (see 16 January 1830).

Circa 24 January-February 1830

Joseph Smith receives a revelation directing Oliver Cowdery and Hiram Page to sell the Book of Mormon copyright in Canada. Page says that he, Cowdery, Joseph Knight, and Josiah Stowell made the trip to Kingston, Ontario, Canada, but were unsuccessful in their mission. David Whitmer remembered that Joseph Jr. was at the Whitmer residence in Fayette when the group returned (VI.A.29, DAVID WHITMER INTERVIEW WITH *OMAHA* [NE] *HERALD*, 10 OCT 1886; VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 31; VI.C.2, HIRAM PAGE TO WILLIAM MCLELLIN, 2 FEB 1848). According to another source, the men left "early in 1830" and "went over on ice" (VI.A.F.12, J. L. TRAUGHBER TO [JAMES T. COBB?], CIRCA 1879). Because Page said the revelation was received in Manchester, it was probably dictated during Smith's January 1830 visit (see circa 24 January 1830).

29 January 1830

Martin Harris and Richard Sweet are sued by Abner F. Lakey and James S. Stoddard for a $300 debt (Common Pleas Book, Wayne County Court House, Lyons, New York).

10 March 1830

A Presbyterian committee reports that Lucy, Hyrum, and Samuel Smith acknowledged that they had "entirely neglected the ordinances of the church for the last eighteen months and that they did not wish to unite with us any more" (III.L.20, PALMYRA [NY] PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH RECORDS, MAR 1830; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:105-110).

Mid-March 1830

The printing of the Book of Mormon is finished (III.B.8, JOHN H. GILBERT INTERVIEW, 1881; III.H.2, JOHN H. GILBERT TO JAMES T. COBB, 10 FEB 1879, 11; III.H.8, JOHN H. GILBERT TO JAMES T. COBB, 23 OCT 1887; III.H.10, JOHN H. GILBERT MEMORANDUM, 8 SEP 1892). The binding begins about this time.

19 March 1830

The *Wayne Sentinel* announces that copies of the Book of Mormon will be ready for sale "in the course of next week" (III.E.1, *WAYNE SENTINEL,* 1824-1836, under 19 March 1830).

22 March 1830

Eunice, daughter of Calvin and Sophronia Stoddard, is born (L. Smith 1853, 43).

26 March 1830

The *Wayne Sentinel* announces that the Book of Mormon is for sale at the Palmyra bookstore (III.E.1, *WAYNE SENTINEL,* 1824-1836, under 26 March 1830). However, the entire first edition will not be completed until early summer 1830 (III.J.8, POMEROY TUCKER ACCOUNT, 1867, 53).

26-31 March 1830 (A)

Joseph Knight takes Joseph Jr. to Manchester (NY) and sees Harris carrying several copies of the Book of Mormon. Harris complains that the books are not selling. Knight stays a few days waiting for more books to be bound (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 6). Smith evidently arrived when the first books were completed, probably between 26-31 March.

26-31 March 1830 (B)

Smith receives a revelation (D&C 19) in Manchester (NY) for Martin Harris, commanding him to sell his property to finance the printing of the Book of Mormon (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839,

35-36; IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 6). This revelation was probably received within a few days of Smith's arrival in Manchester.

26 March-6 April 1830

Joseph Smith gives his seer stone to Oliver Cowdery in the spring of 1830 before organization of the church on 6 April, according to David Whitmer (VI.A.33, DAVID WHITMER, *ADDRESS,* 1887, 32). However, there is evidence that Smith would use it after this period.

29 March 1830

David Marks visits the Whitmers in Fayette (NY) and speaks with some of the Book of Mormon witnesses (VI.F.1, DAVID MARKS ACCOUNT, 1831). Joseph Smith is evidently not present, still in Manchester with Joseph Knight (see 26-31 March 1830).

6 April 1830

The church is organized in Manchester (NY) (see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, n. 82). Joseph Sr. and Martin Harris are baptized by Oliver Cowdery in the evening (ibid., 38, DRAFT:9; IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 7; see also circa 8/9 April 1830). The first church conference is appointed for 1 June 1830—eventually held on 9 June (see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, DRAFT:14).

7 April 1830

Hyrum Smith incurs a debt of $20.07 with Levi Daggett of Palmyra (III.L.19, NATHAN PIERCE DOCKET BOOK, 1830).

Circa 8/9 April 1830

While both the history draft and 1839 history date Lucy Smith's and Sarah Rockwell's baptisms to 6 April 1830, a note in the draft says that the two women were baptized "2 or 3 days afterward" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 37, DRAFT:9-10).

11 April 1830

Oliver Cowdery preaches his first sermon in Fayette on Sunday, 11 April 1830, and baptizes Hiram and Katharine Page and Christian, Anne, Jacob, and Elizabeth Whitmer (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 39). The history draft adds the baptism of Mary Page, of whom nothing is known (DRAFT:11).

16 April 1830

Joseph Smith dictates a revelation (D&C 22) "in consequence of some

desiring to unite with the church without re-baptism, who had previously been baptized" (Book of Commandments XXIII, heading). William E. McLellin's early copy of the revelation bears the date 16 April 1830 (Manuscript Revelations, William E. McLellin Collection, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah). This revelation therefore may have pertained to those who submitted to baptism on 18 April 1830 (see below).

18 April 1830

Oliver Cowdery baptizes Peter Sr., Mary, and Elizabeth Ann Whitmer, William, Elizabeth, and Vincent Jolly, and Ziba Peterson in Seneca Lake on Sunday, 18 April 1830 (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 39).

Circa 19 April 1830

Willard Chase asks Hyrum Smith to return the seer stone. Martin Harris is present. Chase says that Hyrum was indignant and shook his fist at him (III.A.14, WILLARD CHASE STATEMENT, CIRCA 11 DEC 1833, 247). On 19 April 1830, Abner Cole published a note, perhaps written by Chase, warning Hyrum "not to be quite so impertinent, when *decent* folks denounce the imposition of the 'Gold Bible'" (III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1829-1831, under 19 April 1830).

Circa late April 1830

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery visit the Knight family in Colesville (NY). During a meeting, Smith casts a devil out of Newel Knight (e.g., I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 39-41; III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1829-1831, under 30 June 1830). Joseph Smith's history draft originally dated the exorcism to June 1830, after the conference of 9 June (DRAFT:11), but this and associated errors were corrected, probably with the assistance of Knight himself. Smith mentioned that Knight assisted him in writing his history on 4-5 July 1839 (see Faulring 1987, 238). Knight follows Smith's history in dating his exorcism to April 1830 (IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 49-50).

1 May 1830

Smith fails to make the final payment of $86 to Isaac Hale for his land in Harmony (V.E.5, JOSEPH SMITH HARMONY [PA] LAND RECORDS, 1828-1833).

Circa 2 May 1830

Joseph Sr.'s brother Samuel dies in St. Lawrence County (NY) (Anderson 1984, 555, n. 127).

7 May 1830

Justice Nathan Pierce issues a judgement against Joseph Sr. and Abraham Fish in the case of Lemuel Durfee's estate (III.L.19, NATHAN PIERCE DOCKET BOOK, 1830; see 19 January 1830).

Circa May 1830

Joseph Smith visits Fayette (NY) and meets with local opposition (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 41).

Late May 1830

Newel Knight visits Joseph Smith in Fayette and is baptized by David Whitmer (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 41).

1 June 1830

Abner Cole announces that Cowdery—"the *apostle* to the NEPHITES"—has left for the east (III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1829-1831, under 1 June 1830). He is probably on his way to the church conference in Fayette (see 9 June 1830).

8 June 1830

Justice Nathan Pierce issues a summons for Hyrum Smith to appear in the case of Levi Daggett (see 28 June 1830).

9 June 1830

The first church conference is held at the Peter Whitmer, Sr., home in Fayette (NY). There are twenty-seven members of the church at this time. Samuel Smith is ordained an elder; Joseph Sr. and Hyrum Smith are ordained priests. The meeting is adjourned and another appointed to be held on 26 September 1830 (see I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 41; VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830 & 2 JAN 1831).

9/10 June 1830

David Whitmer baptizes the following people in Seneca Lake: John Poorman, John, Julia, and Harriot Jolly, Jerusha, Katharine, William, and Don C. Smith, Orrin P., Caroline, and Electa Rockwell (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 42; I.D.4, WILLIAM SMITH, *ON MORMONISM,* 1883, 16 [minus Katharine Smith]). William Smith dated his baptism to 9 June 1830. A crossed-out portion of Joseph Smith's history draft dates this event to 10 June 1830, while the history says "shortly after this conference" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 42, DRAFT:11).

10/11 June 1830

A prayer meeting is held in Fayette (NY), during which Oliver Cowdery confirms those who were baptized the previous day. There are various spiritual manifestations; Newell Knight feels overwhelmed by the Spirit and faints twice (I.D.4, WILLIAM SMITH, *ON MORMONISM,* 1883, 16-17). William dates this event to 10 June 1830, but see 9/10 June 1830 above.

Circa 13 June 1830

Joseph Smith's history says that "immediately after conference," he returned to Harmony with his wife, Oliver Cowdery, and John and David Whitmer (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 42). While they were certainly in Harmony by 21 June (see below), "immediately" implies an earlier arrival.

Circa 13-25 June 1830

Smith begins his revision of Genesis, dictating to Oliver Cowdery the text of Moses 1:1-5:23a (Old Testament Manuscript #1, 1-10, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.). The heading of the first chapter reads: "A Revelation given to Joseph the Revelator June 1830." An insertion in Smith's history in the hand of W. W. Phelps implies that Moses 1 was dictated at Colesville following Smith's trials, July 1-3, which conflicts with the date on the manuscript (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 48, addendum A-1). Both Robert J. Matthews and D. Michael Quinn have dated it 23-30 June (Matthews 1975, 26-27; Quinn 1994, 23), but I consider Smith's activities in Colesville to have been too crowded and distracting for such work.

18 June 1830

Nathan Pierce issues a second summons for Hyrum Smith to appear in the case of Levi Daggett. The first summons was returned without satisfaction (see 28 June 1830).

20 June 1830

According to Abner Cole, Mormons held a "disorderly meeting on Sunday [20 June] evening at the MARKET" where "one of JO'S *greatest* apostles, gave decided tokens of entire approbation [of the lack of decorum]" (III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1829-1831, under 22 June 1830).

21 June 1830 (A)

Constable Harrington is sent to serve a second summons at Hyrum Smith's

residence in Manchester (NY), but it is returned without satisfaction on 28 June 1830 (see 28 June 1830).

21 June 1830 (B)

Joseph Smith pays Isaac Hale interest on the balance due for the land in Harmony (V.E.5, JOSEPH SMITH HARMONY [PA] LAND RECORDS, 1828-1833).

Circa 25 June 1830

Joseph Smith, in company with his wife, Oliver Cowdery, and David and John Whitmer, visits the Colesville (NY) area and appoints a meeting for the next Sabbath (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 42). Judging by the sequence of events (see below), they probably arrived on Friday, 25 June 1830.

26 June 1830

On the day following Joseph Smith's arrival in Colesville (NY), probably Saturday, 26 June 1830 (see below), a dam is built across a small stream near the Knight home for baptisms (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 42).

27 June 1830

A meeting held on Sunday, 27 June 1830 (see below), despite local opposition and the destruction of the dam built across a stream for baptisms. The Reverend Sherer attempts to abduct seventeen-year-old Emily Colburn (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 42-43).

28 June 1830

Joseph Sr. represents Hyrum Smith, who is sued by Levi Daggett for $20.07 (III.L.19, NATHAN PIERCE DOCKET BOOK, 1830).

28/29 June 1830

On Monday morning (28 June), Emily Colburn's brother-in-law arrives in Colesville with power of attorney and takes her back to her brother's residence in Sandford, Broome County (NY). The dam across the creek is replaced and Cowdery baptizes the following persons: Emma Smith, Hezekiah and Martha Peck, Joseph and Polly Knight and their children Polly and Joseph Jr., William and Esther Stringham and daughter Julia, Aaron and Esther Culver, and Levi Hall (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 43). Sally Knight, wife of Newell Knight, is said to have been baptized on 29 June 1830, but Larry Porter argues that this is an error (IV.E.3, SALLY KNIGHT OBITUARY, 1834; Porter 1971, 202-3). A mob of agitated local people gathers.

30 June 1830

Joseph Smith is arrested by Constable Ebenezer Hatch on Wednesday, 30 June, for being a "disorderly person." He spends the night in a South Bainbridge (NY) tavern with the constable by his side (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 44; IV.F.5, EBENEZER HATCH BILL OF COSTS, 4 JUL 1830). Smith says the arrest took place on a Monday (28 June), but the Chenango County (NY) records indicate that the trial was held on a Thursday (1 July), which would mean that the arrest occurred on Wednesday (IV.F.4, JOSEPH CHAMBERLIN BILL OF COSTS, 1 JUL 1830). It seems that three days were compressed into one in Smith's telling. He remembered that a mob gathered at the baptism of thirteen people in Colesville, that he and his followers retired to Joseph Knight's house, the mob surrounded the house, he and others relocated to Newel Knight's residence, the mob followed, and that when he and his followers "had nearly all collected" for the evening's confirmation meeting, he was arrested, after which he and the constable were ambushed by the mob on the way to South Bainbridge. There are several anomalies in the narrative, including the ease with which Smith and his followers were able to traverse hostile territory, the apparent omnipresence of the mob, and an impression that Smith's followers reassembled before having dispersed. In fact, the confirmation meeting was probably canceled due to the neighbors' interference. In any case, the documentary evidence is that there were baptisms on Monday and an arrest on Wednesday. It is also noteworthy that while Smith says it was at Newel Knight's that he was arrested, Joseph Knight, Sr., remembered that "the officer came to my house near night and took him" (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 8).

Circa 30 June 1830

Samuel Smith leaves Manchester (NY) on a mission, which includes Livonia (NY), home of Alvah Beaman (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:152-53).

1 July 1830

Joseph Smith is tried in South Bainbridge (NY) before Justice Joseph Chamberlin (IV.F.4, JOSEPH CHAMBERLIN BILL OF COSTS, 1 JUL 1830). Joseph Knight, Sr., hires James Davidson and John Reed to defend Smith. Josiah Stowell testifies concerning the horse he sold to Smith, for which he has not yet been paid (see 1-4 October 1829). Smith is acquitted but is served another warrant and immediately taken to Colesville, Broome County (NY), where he spends another night with Constable Ebenezer Hatch (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839,

44-45; IV.C.6, JOHN S. REED REMINISCENCE, 1844; IV.D.1, JOHN S. REED TO BRIGHAM YOUNG, 6 DEC 1861; IV.F.5, EBENEZER HATCH BILL OF COSTS, 4 JUL 1830).

2/3 July 1830

Joseph Smith appears before Justice Joel K. Noble in Colesville (NY) and is again defended by Davidson and Reed. The trial lasts 23 hours and involves 43 witnesses (e.g., I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 45-47; IV.C.5, JOEL K. NOBLE TO JONATHAN B. TURNER, 8 MAR 1842, 2, 3; IV.D.1, JOHN S. REED TO BRIGHAM YOUNG, 6 DEC 1861). Newel Knight is examined concerning Smith's exorcism. Josiah Stowell and Oliver Cowdery testify (IV.B.2, MARTHA CAMPBELL TO JOSEPH SMITH, 19 DEC 1843; IV.C.2, ABRAM W. BENTON REMINISCENCE, MAR 1831).

3 July 1830

Joseph Smith escapes and meets his wife at the Colesville home of Elizabeth (Hale) and Benjamin Wasson (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 47; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:Frag. 6, 1853:158).

4 July 1830

Joseph and Emma Smith return to Harmony (PA) on Sunday, 4 July (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 47).

5 July 1830

Fifteen acres on Lot No. 1 in Manchester (NY) are taxed to Hyrum Smith, probably the land on which the Smiths' Manchester cabin was located (III.L.6, SMITH MANCHESTER [NY] LAND ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1821-1823 & 1830).

Early July 1830

A "few days" after the events of 4 July 1830, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery visit Newel Knight in Colesville (NY) "intending to confirm those who had been baptized [on 28 June 1830]," but flee from their enemies and return to Harmony (PA) (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 47-48). On their return to Harmony, Smith and Cowdery receive a vision of three angels, later identified as Peter, James, and John (Bushman 1984, 163, 240-41, n. 55). Smith says that the visitation took place "in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna county, and Colesville, Broom[e] county, on the Susquehanna River" (I.A.21, JOSEPH SMITH TO CHURCH, 6 SEP 1842, 936; see also I.A.29, ADDISON EVERETT ACCOUNTS, 1881 & 1882, which

links the visitation with events of 3 July 1830). The vision is not connected to reception of priesthood authority until an 1835 addition to D&C 27 (see v. 12).

Early-mid July 1830 (A)

Joseph Smith receives revelations (D&C 24, 25, 26) at Harmony (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 48-50): "after thou hast sowed thy fields and secured them, go speedily unto the church which is in Colesville, Fayette, and Manchester" (24:3). Emma is instructed to be a scribe for her husband "that I may send my servant, Oliver Cowdery, whithersoever I will." She is also told to "make a selection of sacred hymns" (25:6, 11). Another revelation instructs Smith, Cowdery, and John Whitmer about "confirming [members of the] church at Colesville" and regarding "common consent" (26:1-2).

Early-mid July 1830 (B)

Shortly after receiving the above revelations, Oliver Cowdery is sent to Fayette while John Whitmer helps Joseph Smith arrange and copy the revelations. Smith receives a letter from Cowdery complaining about priestcraft in the "Articles and Covenants" (D&C 20:37). Smith immediately writes to ask by what authority Cowdery would alter the word of God (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 50-51).

Circa late July 1830

Soon after the above exchange of letters, perhaps in late July, Joseph Smith visits Fayette and convinces Cowdery and the Whitmers that D&C 20:37 is in harmony with scripture (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 51).

2 August-early September 1830

"Joseph Smith, Jun." is enumerated in the 1830 census of Harmony, Susquehanna County (PA), sometime between 2 August 1830 when the census taking began and early September 1830 when Smith left Harmony. He is listed at age twenty-four with three other males between twenty and thirty years of age (probably Oliver Cowdery, age twenty-three, who had previously lived with Smith; John Whitmer, age twenty-seven, then living with him; and an unidentified male); one female between twenty and thirty, corresponding to Emma; and one unidentified male child between ten and fifteen (see V.E.7, HARMONY [PA] CENSUS RECORD, 1830).

2 August-late November 1830

The Joseph Smith, Sr., family is enumerated in the 1830 census of Man-

chester (NY). The ages of the males correspond to Joseph Sr., Hyrum, Don Carlos, William, and Samuel; the ages of the females correspond to Lovina and Mary (Hyrum's children), Lucy (Joseph Sr.'s daughter), Jerusha (Hyrum's wife), Lucy Mack Smith, and an unknown female between thirty and forty years of age. Missing from the list is seventeen-year-old Katharine, who may have hired out to neighbors (III.L.21, MANCHESTER [NY] CENSUS RECORD, 1830). This was recorded sometime after the commencement of the census on 2 August and probably before the Smiths relocated to Fayette, New York, in mid-late November (see mid-late November 1830).

14 August 1830

Justice Nathan Pierce issues an execution order in the case of Levi Daggett vs. Hyrum Smith authorizing Constable Nathan Harrington either to collect $23.04 from Hyrum or to arrest him (III.L.19, NATHAN PIERCE DOCKET BOOK, 1830).

16-31 August 1830

Joseph Smith, Sr., and son Don Carlos set out for Stockholm and Potsdam, St. Lawrence County (NY), to visit Smith family relatives. Joseph Sr.'s father Asael is converted but not baptized (other Smith family members will later convert). Joseph and Don Carlos remain about a week (I.G.3, JOHN SMITH REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1839; J. Smith 1948, 4:393). George A. Smith says that the visit occurred in August and included a Saturday and Sunday (I.G.4, GEORGE A. SMITH REMINISCENCES, CIRCA 1846, 1857 & CIRCA 1858). Lucy Smith says that her husband returned shortly after Parley P. Pratt and Hyrum Smith arrived in Fayette in late August and before Samuel Smith left on his third mission to Livonia about 1 October (LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:157, MS:160; see late August 1830 and 1 October 1830).

25 August 1830

Isaac Hale signs over the Harmony property to Joseph Smith. John Whitmer signs as one of two witnesses to the transaction. The deed is dated 25 August 1830, but the reverse side indicates that the final payment was received on 26 August (V.E.5, JOSEPH SMITH HARMONY [PA] LAND RECORDS, 1828-1833). Joseph Smith gives a promissory note to George H. Noble & Co. for $190.95 (V.E.6, GEORGE H. NOBLE AND COMPANY VS. JOSEPH SMITH, 25 AUG 1830).

26 August 1830

Joseph Smith pays Isaac Hale the remaining balance of $86 for his home and thirteen-acre lot (see above). This leaves Smith with $104.95. of the

$190.95 he received the previous day from George H. Noble & Co., which on the 26th enters an "Amicable" action against Smith for the amount and puts a lien on Smith's property. Isaac and Elizabeth Hale appear before Justice Jesse Lane concerning the sale to Joseph Smith. The debt to George Noble & Co. will be satisfied sometime before 4 June 1831 (V.E.5, JOSEPH GEORGE H. NOBLE AND COMPANY VS. JOSEPH SMITH, 25 AUG 18SMITH HARMONY [PA] LAND RECORDS, 1828-1833; V.E.6,30).

28 August 1830

Joseph Smith and John Whitmer write from Harmony (PA) to the Colesville (PA) Saints explaining why they have not visited them. The two were apparently waiting for David Whitmer and Hyrum Smith to bring a horse and wagon from Fayette (I.A.3, JOSEPH SMITH TO COLESVILLE SAINTS, 28 AUG 1830; IV.A.2, NEWEL KNIGHT JOURNAL, CIRCA 1846, 21; IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 63).

Late August 1830

Parley P. Pratt arrives in Manchester (NY) and speaks with Hyrum Smith. The two walk to Fayette, arriving the same evening (III.K.16, PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1854 [PART I], 36, 38-39; III.K.21, PARLEY P. PRATT REMINISCENCE, 1856 [PART I]).

Circa 1 September 1830

Parley P. Pratt is baptized in Seneca Lake, confirmed, and ordained an elder by Oliver Cowdery (VI.F.7, PARLEY P. PRATT REMINISCENCE, 1854 [PART II], 43).

3 September 1830

Thomas B. Marsh is baptized by David Whitmer in Fayette (Porter 1971, 263).

4 September 1830

Newel Knight and his wife visit Joseph Smith, Jr., in Harmony (PA). Joseph receives a revelation (D&C 27:1-4) concerning the use of wine in the sacrament. Joseph and Emma Smith, Newel and Sally Knight, and John Whitmer hold a sacrament meeting, after which Emma and Sally are confirmed (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 51-52; IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 62). Joseph Smith's history has "early August" for the reception of D&C 27:1-4, and Knight's autobiography follows this dating, but the Book of Command-

ments indicates 4 September 1830. The compilers of Smith's history probably re-dated the Knights' visit to Harmony based on their belief that Smith had moved to Fayette prior to the church conference of 1 September 1830 (actually held 26-28 September). The compilers also re-dated and divided D&C 27, "the first paragraph [vv. 1-4] of which was written at this time [early August], and the remainder in the September following," according to their assumption (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 51). However, the absence of D&C 27:5-18 from the Book of Commandments indicates that these verses were more likely composed in 1835 prior to publication in the Doctrine and Covenants.

5 September 1830

Parley P. Pratt preaches in Fayette (NY) at the home of a Mr. [Philip?] Burroughs, probably on the first Sunday after Pratt's baptism (VI.F.6, PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1854 [PART II], 43).

5-8 September 1830

This is the probable time of the arrival in Harmony (PA) of Hyrum Smith and David Whitmer from Fayette (NY). They are not in Harmony during the 4 September 1830 visit of Newel and Sally Knight (see above). Whitmer was still in Fayette on 3 September 1830 (see above). The high-end date is determined by subtracting a minimum of eight days from latest possible date for Joseph Smith's departure from Harmony (see below, 13-16 September 1830), including two days for the Colesville confirmations, three days for Hyrum's and David's return to Fayette, and three days for Peter Whitmer's letter to arrive at Harmony.

5-10 September 1830

Joseph and Hyrum Smith and John and David Whitmer visit Colesville (NY) and, at an evening meeting, confirm those who had been baptized the previous June. Joseph Smith's history incorrectly dates this event "towards the latter end of August" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 53). The compilers of the history did not have access to the Far West Record and incorrectly believed that the 26-28 September conference in Fayette had started on 1 September (see 26-28 September 1830). Joseph Knight, Jr., follows the error in Smith's history, dating the Colesville confirmations to "four weeks" after Smith's trials in early July (IV.A.5, JOSEPH KNIGHT, JR., HISTORY, 16 AUG 1862). Newel Knight dates it Sunday, 29 August, evidently attempting to harmonize Smith's 28 August letter in his possession with Smith's history (IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 63-64; see

28 August 1830). The high-end date is determined by subtracting a minimum of six days from the latest possible date for Smith's departure from Harmony (see 13-16 September 1830): three days for Hyrum's and David's return to Fayette and three days for Peter Whitmer's letter to arrive at Harmony.

6-10 September 1830 (A)

Joseph Smith and company leave Colesville the "next morning" after the confirmations and return to Harmony (see below).

6-10 September 1830 (B)

David Whitmer and Hyrum Smith leave Harmony and return to Fayette (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 53-54). For the high-end date, see 5-10 September 1830.

13 September 1830

Nathan Pierce's execution against Hyrum Smith is returned. Constable Harrington collects $12.81 from Hyrum (Hyrum's presence not necessarily required), pays Levi Daggett $9.94 against the $21.07 judgement, and gives Pierce $1.79 for court costs, leaving $1.08 for himself (III.L.19, NATHAN PIERCE DOCKET BOOK, 1830; see also 27 September 1830).

13-16 September 1830

The probable time of Joseph Smith's departure from Harmony (PA) for Fayette (NY). The move was precipitated by a letter Smith received from Peter Whitmer inviting him to live with him, "having heard of the persecutions which had been got up against us at Harmony" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 53). It is probable that Whitmer learned of the situation from Hyrum Smith and Whitmer's son David who had just returned from Harmony (see above). Smith's history says that "some few days" after his return from Colesville (see above), Newel Knight came with a wagon to move him and his wife to Fayette (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 53). Writing to her brother David Hale in February 1841, Emma Smith mentioned that she had left Harmony "ten years [ago] last Sept[ember]" (Emma Smith to Lorenzo D. Wassen and David Hale, 12 February 1841, typescript, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah). The low-end date for the move is determined by adding a minimum of eight days to 5 September, the day after Newel Knight and his wife visited Harmony: two days for the Colesville confirmations, three days for Hyrum Smith and David Whitmer to return to Fayette, and three days for Smith to receive a letter from Peter Whitmer. Parley P. Pratt, who

was baptized in Fayette about 1 September 1830, preached on the 5th and soon after left Fayette but did not meet Smith until early October (VI.F.6, PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1854 [PART II], 43, 46). The high-end date is determined by subtracting a minimal three-day trip from Harmony to Fayette to arrive on 25 September before the conference there. However, according to Newel Knight, he conveyed the Smiths to Fayette, returned home to Colesville to arrange his affairs, then returned to Fayette on the evening of the 25th in time for the conference (IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 64). Thus, the high-end date can be further narrowed by subtracting a minimum of six days for Knight's second trip.

19 September 1830

Parley P. Pratt baptizes Orson Pratt at Canaan (NY) (VI.F.8, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, 1858).

19 September/26 September/3 October 1830 (?)

Ezra Thayre hears Hyrum preach at the Smith residence in Manchester (NY) on a Sunday before Joseph Jr.'s arrival (see 28 September/5 October 1830; III.J.6, EZRA THAYRE REMINISCENCE, 1862, 82). Assuming that Hyrum attended the Fayette conference of 26-28 September (there is no certain evidence that he did), Thayre may have heard him preach on the Sunday before (19 September) or after (3 October) the conference. If Newel Knight's dating is correct, 3 October is ruled out (see 4 October 1830).

25 September 1830

Newel Knight arrives at the home of Peter Whitmer in Fayette (NY) for the church conference and spends the night in Joseph Smith's room. Smith is troubled by Hiram Page's revelations (IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 64-65).

26 September 1830

Before the conference, Joseph Smith receives a revelation (D&C 28) condemning Page's revelations, affirming his own sole leadership, and establishing the rule of common consent (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 53-58; IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 65).

26-28 September 1830

The three-day church conference is held in the Whitmer home from Sunday through Tuesday (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 54-59). Smith's history misdates the conference to 1 September, but the

Far West Record has 26 September (VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830, & 2 JAN 1831). This record lists the number of people who had joined the church since 9 June as thirty-five, bringing the total church membership to sixty-two. During the conference, Smith receives a revelation (D&C 29) in the presence of six elders regarding doctrinal and eschatological matters, as well as two other revelations (D&C 30 and 31) regarding a mission to the Lamanites. The meeting adjourns until 1 January 1831 (actually held 2 January).

27 September 1830

Nathan Pierce's execution against Hyrum Smith in favor of Levi Daggett is reissued for collection of the remainder of the debt or arrest (III.L.19, NATHAN PIERCE DOCKET BOOK, 1830; see also 13 September 1830 and 26 October 1830).

28 September/5 October 1830 (?)

Joseph and Emma Smith arrive in Manchester (NY), according to Lucy Smith, the day before Hyrum's departure (see 29 September/6 October 1830; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:158-59, 166-67). Joseph Smith receives a revelation commanding Joseph Sr. and Lucy Smith to move to Waterloo (NY) and Hyrum Smith and family to move to Colesville. If Newel Knight's dating is correct, 5 October is ruled out (see 4 October 1830).

29 September/6 October 1830 (?)

Hyrum Smith and family move in with Newel Knight in Colesville (IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 65; Porter 1971, 109). Hyrum's move may have been precipitated by Justice Nathan Pierce's execution against him (see 28 September 1830). Lucy says that Hyrum moved on a Wednesday (29 September or 6 October) after Joseph and Emma arrived in Manchester (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:Frag. 6 [back]). If Newel Knight's dating is correct, then Hyrum left on or before 1 October, possibly on Wednesday, 29 September (see 4 October 1830).

29 September/6 October 1830 (?)

Lucy Smith says that on the day following their arrival, Joseph and Emma visited Macedon, the residence of Sophronia and Calvin Stoddard (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:158-69; on dating, see above). If Newel Knight's dating is correct, 6 October is ruled out (see 4 October 1830).

Circa 1 October 1830

Samuel Smith leaves Manchester (NY) on a third mission to Livonia (NY) (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:159).

3 October/10 October 1830 (?)

Ezra Thayre visits Joseph Smith in Manchester (NY). Parley P. Pratt baptizes Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet (III.J.6, EZRA THAYRE REMINISCENCE, 1862, 82-83). Thayre said his baptism occurred on the Sunday after Joseph Smith came to Manchester (see 28 September/5 October; I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:164).

4 October 1830 (?)

Hyrum Smith attends a meeting at Aaron Culver's in Colesville (NY) on 4, 6, and 10 October, according to Newel Knight (IV.A.2, NEWEL KNIGHT JOURNAL, CIRCA 1846, 23). This portion of Knight's journal was passed over when published in 1883. However, Hyrum's presence in Colesville as early as 4 October is problematical, conflicting with both Ezra Thayre's and Lucy Smith's sequencing of events, although neither source definitively excludes Knight's dating (see above; and I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, n. 266).

6 October 1830 (?)

Newel Knight says that Hyrum Smith attended a sacrament meeting at Aaron Culver's in Colesville on this date (see 4 October 1830).

10 October 1830 (?)

Hyrum Smith attends another meeting at Aaron Culver's in Colesville (NY) where two are baptized (see 4 October 1830).

14 October 1830

Hyrum Smith and Newel Knight hold a meeting at Hezekiah Peck's home in South Bainbridge (NY). Four people are converted and possibly baptized. Knight heals Peck's wife (IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 66-67). Ezekiel and Electa Peck are baptized in October 1830, perhaps on this occasion (*Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 27 [April 1936]: 78-79).

15-17 October 1830

Joseph Smith receives a revelation (D&C 32), probably in Manchester (NY), regarding the so-called "Lamanite mission" (see "Kirtland Revelation Book," 83-84, where a notation reads: "Manchester October 1830"; see also Cook 1981, 128, n. 1). Lucy Smith incorrectly says that

this revelation was received in Waterloo (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:169).

17 October 1830

Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson, and Peter Whitmer, Jr., sign the "Missionaries Covenant" in Manchester (NY); Joseph Smith, Jr., and David Whitmer sign as witnesses (III.L.22, MISSIONARIES COVENANT, 17 OCT 1830).

17-21 October 1830

Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson, and Peter Whitmer leave Manchester (NY) in "late" October 1830 (III.K.16, PARLEY P. PRATT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1854 [PART I], 49; Oliver Cowdery to Lyman Cowdery, 13 January 1834, Oliver Cowdery Letterbook, 1833-38, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, which confirms an October departure). According to Smith's history, the missionaries left "immediately" after receiving the revelation (D&C 32; I.A.15) mentioned above (JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 60). It is likely that the missionaries left soon after 17 October (see 15-17 October 1830 and 21 October 1830). They arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, on 29 October (see 29 October 1830). At this time, the church membership is estimated to be between seventy and eighty (III.I.5, WILLIAM W. PHELPS ACCOUNT, 1833).

18-21 October 1830

Joseph Jr. returns to Fayette (NY) the day after signing the "Missionaries Covenant" (see above) and before revising the book of Genesis on 21 October (see below).

18-31 October 1830 (A)

Peter Bauder visits Joseph Smith at Peter Whitmer's residence in Fayette (NY), where he sees the manuscript of Smith's Bible revision (I.A.4, JOSEPH SMITH INTERVIEW WITH PETER BAUDER, OCT 1830, 36).

18-31 October 1830 (B)

Joseph Smith receives a revelation (D&C 33) in Fayette (NY) for Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 76-77).

18-31 October 1830 (C)

Orson Pratt travels to Fayette (NY) to see the prophet and the Book of Mormon witnesses in "October 1830" (VI.F.8, ORSON PRATT AC-

COUNT, 1858). Pratt states that his arrival was after Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer left for the west (Young et al., 1853-86, 7:178).

21 October 1830

Joseph Smith revises Genesis (Moses 5:43b-51) in Fayette (NY). The manuscript (Old Testament Ms. #1, Community of Christ Library-Archives) bears the date 21 October 1830 for the section of the Book of Moses where John Whitmer's handwriting begins (Matthews 1975, 27-28, 64, 68).

26 October 1830

Justice Nathan Pierce's execution against Hyrum Smith is returned, stating that neither Hyrum nor his property can be found (III.L.19, NATHAN PIERCE DOCKET BOOK, 1830).

29 October 1830

Oliver Cowdery's letter from Kirtland (OH), dated 12 November 1830, states that he and the others "arrived at this place two weeks this day" (Newel Knight, Journal, circa 1846, private possession).

31 October 1830

Asael Smith dies in St. Lawrence County (NY) (I.G.4, GEORGE A. SMITH REMINISCENCES, CIRCA 1846, 1857, & CIRCA 1858).

1 November 1830

Elizabeth Knight, daughter of Joseph and Polly Knight, is baptized in Colesville (NY) by Hyrum Smith, the youngest baptized into the church up to that time (b. 22 July 1817; *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 26 [October 1935]: 150).

4 November 1830

Joseph Smith receives a revelation (D&C 34) in Fayette (NY) calling Orson Pratt to the ministry (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 77-78; VI.F.8, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, 1858).

Circa 5 November 1830

This is the probable time of Joseph Sr.'s arrest and imprisonment. Lucy Smith says that Joseph Sr. was arrested on Thursday, the day following Hyrum's departure (see 29 September/6 October), and jailed in Canandaigua for thirty days (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS: Frag. 6 [back]). Following Lucy's sequencing, it has been suggested that Joseph Sr. was arrested either on Thursday, 30 September, following the Fayette conference or the next Thursday, 7 October (Porter 1971, 109). If he was jailed for thirty days and was still in prison on 5 Novem-

ber with Eli Bruce (see below), then the later date is most likely (see 5 November 1830). However, there are several reasons for questioning this sequence of events. If Hyrum left the day after Joseph Jr.'s arrival, and assuming that Joseph Jr. was still in the area until at least 17 October when he signed the "Missionaries Covenant" as a witness, then according to Lucy's chronology, Joseph and Emma should still have been in the vicinity of Manchester when Joseph Sr. was arrested. Yet Joseph and his entourage from Fayette are conspicuously missing from Lucy's account of Joseph Sr.'s arrest and her troubles with creditors several days later. It seems more likely that Joseph Sr. was not arrested until early November after Joseph Jr. had left the area (see also 5 November 1830 and circa 14 December 1830).

5 November 1830

Joseph Sr. has a conversation with Eli Bruce in the Canandaigua jail (III.I.1, ELI BRUCE DIARY, 5 NOV 1830). Despite Lucy Smith's chronology, it seems probable that Bruce's conversation occurred near the beginning of Smith's incarceration, perhaps even on the first day, rather than near the end (see circa 5 November 1830).

Circa 6 November 1830

On the day following Joseph Sr.'s arrest, Lucy Smith seeks assistance from Palmyra merchant Abner Lackey, who procures testimony that will be used to help Joseph Sr. gain access to the jail's courtyard (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:Frag. 7; on dating, see above).

Circa 7 November 1830

Lucy Smith pays a debt in produce owed to Dr. Alexander McIntyre. The Smith Manchester home is invaded by creditors. William Smith returns home from business in time to chase the creditors away. Samuel Smith returns from a mission to Livonia (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:Frag. 7, 1853:162-66; on dating, see above).

Circa 8 November 1830 (A)

Samuel Smith visits his father in jail on the morning following Samuel's return from Livonia (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS: Frag. 7, 1853:162-66; on dating, see above).

Circa 8 November 1830 (B)

Sidney Rigdon is baptized in Mentor (OH). While 14 or 15 November 1830 are usually cited as the date for this event, there is evidence that it occurred sometime between 5 and 12 November. In a letter dated 12 No-

vember, Kirtland, Ohio, Oliver Cowdery states: "seventeen went immediately forward and were baptized, between eleven and twelve at night, and on the 6th there was one more, on the 7th nine in the day time and at night nineteen, on the 8th three, on the 9th three, on the 10th at night one, on the 11th one, on this day another, making in the whole fifty five, among whom are brother Sidney Rigdon and wife" (Newel Knight, Journal, circa 1846, private possession). If the *Painesville Telegraph* is correct in assigning Rigdon's baptism to a Monday, then 8 November may be the correct date (*Painesville Telegraph,* 15 February 1831; also III.G.5, OLIVER COWDERY INTERVIEW WITH JOSIAH JONES, 1830).

12 November 1830

Oliver Cowdery writes a letter dated 12 November 1830 from Kirtland, Ohio, to "Our beloved brethren," evidently in Fayette (NY), describing their success in the area. The letter indicates that Sidney Rigdon had not yet left for New York but was planning to do so "sooner or later." Concerning Rigdon's planned visit, Cowdery wrote: "receive him [as] if from my own bosom, for he is as I am" (Newel Knight Journal, circa 1846, in private possession).

Mid-late November 1830

Samuel Smith moves his mother and sister Lucy (and Don Carlos?) to Waterloo, Seneca County (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:167).

18 November 1830

The Reverend John Sherer writes to Absalom Peters about Mormon activities in Colesville (IV.C.1, JOHN SHERER TO ABSALOM PETERS, 18 NOV 1830).

30 November 1830

Joseph Smith continues to revise Genesis (Moses 5:52-6:18), probably in Fayette (NY). The manuscript (Old Testament Ms. #1, Community of Christ Library-Archives) bears the date 30 November 1830; John Whitmer's handwriting continues (Matthews 1975, 28, 64-65, 68).

1 December 1830 (A)

Joseph Smith continues to revise Genesis (Moses 6:19-7:2), probably in Fayette (NY). The manuscript (see above) bears the date 1 December 1830, written by Emma Smith (Matthews 1975, 28, 65, 68-69; *FARMS Update,* August 1996).

1 December 1830 (B)

Orson Pratt is ordained an elder by Joseph Smith (VI.F.8, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, 1858).

2 December 1830

Orson Pratt is sent on a mission to Colesville (NY). Pratt is given a letter of introduction by Smith and John Whitmer identifying Pratt as "another Servant and Apostle" (I.A.5, JOSEPH SMITH TO COLESVILLE SAINTS, 2 DEC 1830). Pratt would return to Fayette later that month with Hyrum Smith (VI.F.8, ORSON PRATT ACCOUNT, 1858).

Early December 1830 (A)

Hyrum Smith and Newel Knight return from a preaching tour and find Orson Pratt at Newel Knight's home in Colesville (IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 67).

Early December 1830 (B)

The Harmony (PA) land assessment is taken (V.E.4, HARMONY [PA] ASSESSMENT RECORDS, 1828-1831; V.E.5, JOSEPH SMITH HARMONY [PA] LAND RECORDS, 1828-1833). The certification indicates that the assessment was completed between 1-20 December 1830. Joseph Smith is assessed $14 for one acre of first-rate, $48 for six acres of second-rate, and $24 for six acres of third-rate improved land and $25 for his house. The total assessment is $111. An additional notation reads: "removed from here Since last assessment."

Circa 4 December 1830

Joseph Sr. is released from the Canandaigua jail after thirty days (see circa 5 November 1830).

Circa 7 December 1830

Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge arrive at Fayette (NY) shortly before Joseph Smith receives revelations (D&C 35 and 36) concerning them (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 78-80; see 7 December 1830). According to Lucy Smith, Rigdon and Partridge arrive at her home in nearby Waterloo where a meeting is being held (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:Frag. 9).

7 December 1830

Joseph Smith receives revelations (D&C 35 and 36) for Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge in Fayette (NY). The earliest printing of the revelation to Rigdon in the *Ohio Star,* 5 January 1832, dates its reception to 7 December 1830 (see Cook 1981, 51).

7-24 December 1830

Joseph Smith revises Genesis (Moses 6:52a-68; 7:1-8:12), dictating also the "Prophecy of Enoch" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839,

81-87). This portion of Old Testament Manuscript #1 (Community of Christ Library-Archives) is in the handwriting of John Whitmer and Sidney Rigdon (Matthews 1975, 65-66, 69). John Whitmer says the revelation was received in Fayette (NY) shortly after the arrival of Sidney Rigdon in early December 1830. Afterwards, according to Whitmer, "Joseph and Sidney went to the several churchs preaching and prophesying wher=ever they went" (VI.B.1, JOHN WHITMER HISTORY, CIRCA 1836-1838, 5).

11 December 1830

Edward Partridge is baptized, probably in Seneca Lake (Cook 1981, 53). Following his baptism, Partridge writes a letter to Kirtland (OH) announcing his baptism (Dibble 1882, 77).

Circa 14 December 1830

Joseph Sr. arrives in Waterloo/Fayette in December, a week after Sidney Rigdon's arrival on about 7 December (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:Frag. 9). It is therefore likely that Joseph Sr. had been incarcerated in early November rather than early October as Lucy claimed.

15 December 1830

Edward Partridge is ordained an elder by Sidney Rigdon (VI.G.6, EDWARD PARTRIDGE ELDER'S LICENSE, 15 DEC 1830).

24 December 1830

W. W. Phelps meets Joseph Smith, perhaps in Canandaigua or Palmyra (III.I.9, W. W. PHELPS TO OLIVER COWDERY, 21 FEB 1835; VI.F.5, SIDNEY RIGDON REMINISCENCE, 1844; on location, see below).

Late December 1830 (A)

"Soon after" the Enoch revelation was received (see 7-24 December 1830), Joseph Smith receives another revelation (D&C 37) in Canandaigua (NY) instructing him and Sidney Rigdon to stop their revision of the Bible until they move to Ohio (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 87-88; Book of Commandments 39, heading, has Canandaigua for place of reception). Lucy Smith says that the revelation was received in the "later part" of December (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:Frag. 9). The revelation instructs: "ye shall not go until ye have preached my gospel in those parts, and have strengthened up the church whithersoever it is found, and more especially in Colesville" (D&C 37:2; for Smith's and Rigdon's visit to Colesville, see circa 5-23 January 1831).

Late December 1830 (B)

It was probably on this occasion that Sidney Rigdon preached in the Canandaigua courthouse, although Thayre mistakenly dates the event to October 1830 (III.J.6, EZRA THAYRE REMINISCENCE, 1862, 83-84). Rigdon also preached at the Palmyra Young Men's Library Society on the third story of Exchange Row on Main Street (III.B.12, LORENZO SANDERS INTERVIEW, 17 SEP 1884, 9; III.J.8, POMEROY TUCKER ACCOUNT, 1867, 76-79). Pomeroy Tucker dated this event to 1830, thus making it December 1830 rather than January 1831 (Tucker 1867, 126).

2 January 1831

The third church conference is held at the home of Peter Whitmer in Fayette (NY) on Sunday, 2 January 1831. Smith receives a revelation (D&C 38) for the church to move to Ohio (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 88-90; VI.G.2, FAR WEST RECORD, 9 JUN 1830, 26 SEP 1830, & 2 JAN 1831). John Whitmer incorrectly dates the conference to 1 January (VI.B.1, JOHN WHITMER HISTORY, CIRCA 1836-1838, 5).

4 January 1831

Sidney Rigdon writes to the Kirtland (OH) congregation from Fayette (NY) introducing John Whitmer (VI.F.2, SIDNEY RIGDON TO OHIO SAINTS, 4 JAN 1831). Because Rigdon evidently refers to the 2 January 1831 revelation (D&C 38) as "one of the commandments, received day before yesterday," he apparently wrote the letter on 4 January 1831.

5 January 1831

Joseph Smith receives a revelation (D&C 39) in Fayette (NY) for James Covill (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 91-92).

6 January 1831 (A)

Joseph Smith receives a revelation (D&C 40) in Fayette (NY) regarding Covill's apostasy (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 92).

6 January 1831 (B)

Lucy Smith writes from Waterloo (NY) to her brother Solomon Mack in Gilsum (NH), describing the contents of the Book of Mormon (I.B.1, LUCY SMITH TO SOLOMON MACK, 6 JAN 1831).

8 January 1831

Katharine Smith marries Wilkins Jenkins Salisbury (L. Smith 1853, 41; *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 26 [July 1935]: 151-52).

Circa 8-20 January 1831

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon visit Colesville (NY) "several days," during which time Rigdon preaches (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 8; IV.D.7, EMILY [COLBURN] AUSTIN AUTOBIOGRAPHY, 1882, 37-38). This is probably the occasion on which Smith Baker said the two preached in the Knight barn (IV.D.5, GEORGE COLLINGTON, SMITH BAKER, HARRIOT MARSH, AND REBECCA NURSE INTERVIEWS WITH FREDERICK G. MATHER, JUL 1880). Both Joseph Knight and John Whitmer say that this visit occurred after the 2 January church conference (VI.B.1, JOHN WHITMER HISTORY, CIRCA 1836-1838, 9-12); hence, after Smith's 6 January revelation (D&C 40). The low-end date is determined by adding a two-day trip to Colesville from Fayette. The high-end date is determined by subtracting the two days in Harmony (see below) and a two-day trip back to Fayette from Rigdon's 24 January departure to Ohio.

9 January 1831

David Whitmer marries Julia Ann Jolly at Fayette (Cook 1981, 24).

Circa 10-14 January 1831

John Whitmer arrives in Kirtland (OH). The *Painesville Telegraph* reports Whitmer's arrival during the week prior to the 18 January 1831 issue.

11 January 1831

Eber D. Howe of Kirtland (OH) writes to W. W. Phelps in Canandaigua (NY) requesting information about Mormonism (III.I.2, W. W. PHELPS TO E. D. HOWE, 15 JAN 1831; see 15 January 1831).

11-22 January 1831

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon visit Harmony "to settle some Business" (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 8). Knowing that he was soon to move to Ohio, Joseph Smith presumably rents his home to Joseph McKune, Jr. He also may have arranged for payment to Noble & Co. at this time (see 26 August 1830). Having been warned by one of Joseph Knight's sons of trouble awaiting them in Colesville, Smith and Rigdon head directly for Fayette (IV.A.1, JOSEPH KNIGHT, SR., REMINISCENCE, CIRCA 1835-1847, 9). The low-end date is determined by adding a minimal three-day stay in Colesville from the earliest possible date of arrival there.

15 January 1831

W. W. Phelps in Canandaigua (NY) responds to Eber D. Howe in Kirt-

land (OH) (III.I.2, W. W. PHELPS TO E. D. HOWE, 15 JAN 1831; see 11 January 1831).

Mid-January 1831

Joseph Smith receives a letter in Fayette (NY) from John Whitmer in Kirtland (OH) requesting his presence (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:Frag. 9, 1853:170-71).

24 January 1831

Sidney Rigdon is reported to have left Waterloo on Monday, 24 January 1831, on a stage; before leaving, he delivers a sermon in the courthouse (III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1829-1831, under 1 February 1831).

Circa 27 January 1831

According to Joseph Smith's history, Smith departs Waterloo/Fayette in "[t]he latter part of January, in company <with> Brother Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge ... [and] wife" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 92; see also I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, 1853:170-71). However, a Waterloo correspondent for the *Palmyra Reflector* reported that Rigdon left on 24 January and that Smith and others were to follow (III.E.3, *PALMYRA REFLECTOR,* 1829-1831, under 1 February 1831). Further, on 15 February the *Painesville Telegraph* reported that Rigdon arrived in Kirtland on 1 February and that Smith arrived three days later. Newel Knight dates Smith's departure "towards the latter part of January" (IV.A.3, NEWEL KNIGHT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CIRCA 1846, 68). Lucy Smith says that Joseph and Sidney preached along the way, stopping at Calvin and Sophronia Stoddard's home in Macedon and at Preserved Harris's home in Palmyra (I.B.5, LUCY SMITH HISTORY, 1845, MS:Frag. 9 [back]).

1 February 1831

Sidney Rigdon arrives in Kirtland (*Painesville Telegraph,* 15 February 1831).

4 February 1831

Joseph Smith remembered that he arrived in Kirtland (OH) "about the first of February" (I.A.15, JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY, 1839, 92). The *Painesville Telegraph* would report on 15 February that Rigdon arrived on 1 February and that Smith arrived three days later.

Circa 20 February 1831

Hyrum Smith baptizes Jared Carter in Colesville (IV.C.3, JARED CARTER REMINISCENCE, 1832).

22 February 1831

Writing from Kirtland (OH), Joseph Smith instructs Martin Harris to "come as soon as you can ... bring or cause to <be> brought all the books [of Mormon] ... inform the Elders which are there that all of them who can be spared will come here without delay if possable this by commandment of the Lord ... send to Colesville and have either Hiram or Newel to come ~~[=]~~ immediately or both if they can be spared. You will not sell the books [of Mormon] for less than 10 Shillings" (Joseph Smith to Martin Harris, 22 February 1831, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah).

25 February 1831

The payment to Grandin, the printer, is due, as stipulated in Martin Harris's mortgage (III.L.14, MARTIN HARRIS MORTGAGE, 25 AUG 1829).

End of winter/spring 1831

Martin Harris visits Charles Butler of the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company in Geneva (NY) seeking a $1,300 loan (III.F.3, MARTIN HARRIS INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES BUTLER, CIRCA 1830-1831; III.K.6, JAMES GORDON BENNETT ACCOUNT, 1831).

1 April 1831

Martin Harris sells his farm, about 151 acres, to Thomas Lakey of Palmyra (see introduction to III.L.14, MARTIN HARRIS MORTGAGE, 25 AUG 1829).

19 April 1831

Ira J. Wells and company leave Colesville (NY) to later rendezvous in Ithaca (NY) with other Colesville Saints led by Newel Knight. Wells's company arrives in Ithaca on 21 April 1831 (Porter 1971, 302-3, 305; Porter 1990, 8).

21 April 1831

Freeborn De Mill, the Knight family, and others leave Colesville for Ithaca (Porter 1971, 303; Porter 1990, 8). Although Newel Knight wrote in his journal that he left Colesville in early April 1831 (IV.A.2, NEWEL KNIGHT JOURNAL, CIRCA 1846), a brief chronology sketched on the back of a land indenture made out in Joseph Knight's name gives the date of departure: "Colesville <April> 21[,] 1831 on thursday Setout we arived at ithica on Saturday the next [23 April]" (Joseph Knight, Sr., Land Indenture, 14 April 1826, LDS church archives; Porter 1971, 305).

25 April 1831

The Colesville Saints, numbering about sixty-eight men, women, and children, leave Ithaca (NY) on a canal boat to Cayuga Bridge, situated at the north end of Cayuga Lake, and arrive on 26 April (Porter 1871, 306; Porter 1990, 11).

27 April 1831

At Cayuga Bridge, the Colesville Saints change their lading to another canal boat and depart for Buffalo (NY), arriving on 1 May (Porter 1971, 306). They are later joined by the group from Waterloo (NY), headed by Lucy Smith (Porter 1971, 307).

30 April 1831

William W. Phelps is imprisoned at Lyons (NY) for thirty days for an unpaid debt, which Phelps interprets as persecution for his belief in the Book of Mormon (III.I.9, W. W. PHELPS TO OLIVER COWDERY, 21 FEB 1835).

1 May 1831

Martin Harris moves from his Palmyra farm house, according to the stipulation of his sale agreement with Thomas Lakey (see introduction to III.L.14, MARTIN HARRIS MORTGAGE, 25 AUG 1829).

3 May 1831

Martin Harris leaves various articles, including "300 Books of Mormon to be sold for $1.25," with Thomas Lakey of Palmyra ("List of Articles belonging to Martin Harris & left in the hands of Thomas Lakey for safe keeping...," 3 May 1831, Vertical Files, Palmyra King's Daughters Free Library, Palmyra, New York).

3-4 May 1831

Two groups of Fayette (NY) Saints—a group of about fifty headed by Lucy Smith and another of about thirty headed by Thomas B. Marsh—depart from Waterloo (NY) on canal boats, using the Cayuga, Seneca, and Erie canals to reach Buffalo (NY), probably arriving about 7-8 May (Porter 1971, 317; Porter 1990, 15-16).

7 May 1831

W. W. Phelps relinquishes editorship of the *Ontario Phoenix* (*Ontario Phoenix* 4 [11 May 1831]: [2]).

11 May 1831

The Saints in Buffalo (NY) make passage through the ice that had prevented their departure from the Lake Erie port, arriving at Fairport

(OH), 14 May (Porter 1971, 307-8). A group headed by Jared Carter had already left to travel by land to Dunkirk (NY), then by steamboat to Fairport (Porter 1971, 307; Porter 1990, 17-18).

15-21 May 1831

According to the *Wayne Sentinel* on 27 May, Martin Harris and several other families "took up their march from this town [Palmyra] last week for the 'promised land'" (III.E.1, *WAYNE SENTINEL,* 1824-1836, under 27 May 1831). This group headed by Harris numbered about fifty persons (Porter 1990, 19).

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INDEX

Adam-ondi-Ahman (MO), 248

Address to All Believers in Christ (1887), 68, 194-208

Albany (NY), 407

Alcott, Lydia, 89n2

Amalekites, 290, 290n22

American Cyclopaedia, 68, 195

Amity (PA), 195

Anabaptist(s), 378

Anderson, George Edward, 251

Anderson, Richard L., 183, 240, 382

Anderson, Stocky, 336

angel (messenger), appears to Hiram Page, 256; appears eleven times, 272, 272n6, 284; attacks Smith, 19-20; described by David Whitmer, 45, 52; described by Joseph Smith, 309; Moroni, 55, 97, 99, 146, 152, 192, 224, 261, 263; name of, unknown, 136; Nephi, 261; one of three Nephite apostles, 97, 187, 189, 191, 192n22; seen by Joseph Smith (1823), 19, 75, 78, 85, 133, 288, 297, 394; seen by Mary Musselman Whitmer, 31, 45, 48, 52, 56, 187, 189, 191-92, 261-63; seen on road (1829), 10, 44-45, 48, 51-52, 55-56, 75n9, 187, 189, 191, 192; seen by three witnesses, 3, 26, 39, 200, 238, 308-309, 325-26, 345-47; seen under shed, 11

Anthon, Charles, 20, 20n4, 78, 84, 98, 102, 107, 131, 131n22, 154, 159, 159n3, 164, 167, 170, 177, 186, 188, 196, 213, 249n5, 407

Anti-Mason(s), 268, 268n1, 418

apostle(s), 11, 25, 30, 32, 33, 87, 97, 137n8, 155, 156, 161n5, 175, 179, 200n26, 206, 207, 240, 244, 274, 292, 304, 306, 306n3, 316, 316n3, 320, 357, 419, 432, 433, 449

apostleship, 244; restored by Peter, James, and John, 43, 50, 329n9

Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ, 348, 349, 349n10, 352, 355, 357, 437

Australia, 128

Babel, 21, 85

Babylonians, 184

Badham, Jesse R., 220-21

Bainbridge. *See* South Bainbridge, Chenango County (NY)

Baker, Smith, 452

baptism, 25, 119n2, 137n10, 180, 200, 200n26, 202, 216, 276, 277, 318, 318n9, 352, 377, 435; in Colesville, 367, 369, 370, 371, 373, 374-75, 418, 434, 444, 446, 453; Fayette, 3, 4, 9, 94n1, 137, 137n8, 187, 189, 190, 201, 231, 235n7, 242, 244, 255, 282, 283, 283n15, 284, 284n18, 293, 294, 294n13, 294n14, 297, 297n3, 298, 299, 316, 316n3, 317, 320, 321, 329, 332, 336, 337, 338, 359, 363, 364-69, 372, 373, 430, 431, 432, 439, 440, 450; Harmony, 363, 415-16; Macedon, 372; Manchester, 352, 364, 370, 374, 430, 444; South Bainbridge, 370-71, 444

Baptist(s), 277, 278, 303

Barre (MA), 241n2

Batavia (NY), 336n3

Bauder, Peter, 445

Bays, Davis H., 218

Beaman, Alvah, 404, 435

Bearytown, Seneca County (NY), 271

Beaver Island (MI), 66n7

Beebe, George, 369, 369n25

Beebe, Isaac, 369n25

Beebe, Olive, 369, 369n25

Benjamin, William Evarts, 355

Bennett family, 332

Bible, 23, 38, 87, 132, 187, 197, 203, 204, 206, 209, 212, 215, 226, 246, 277, 387, 424

Bidamon, Emma. *See* Smith, Emma (Hale)

Birmingham, Warwickshire (England), 240

bishop, 89n2, 95

Black, James W., 42, 42n8, 49, 70

Black, Joseph S., 226, 251

Blackfoot (ID), 165, 167

Blair, William W., 60, 172, 221

Blakeslee, George A., 89-94, 89n2

Bloomington (ID), 95

Bogart, Samuel, 240

Bond, Myron H., 251

Book of Commandments, 59, 60n5, 205, 206, 207, 351, 439-40

Book of Lehi, 76, 183, 184

Book of Mormon, 12, 24, 28, 32, 33, 34, 37, 46n20, 54, 79, 83, 84, 87, 90, 100, 128, 132, 142, 145, 146, 147, 156, 161, 173, 182, 185, 200, 204, 206, 209, 212, 215, 232, 235, 241, 244, 246, 267, 287, 289, 290, 290n22, 313, 316, 317, 318, 425, 428, 451, 455; and lost tribes of Israel, 18, 18n2, 304, 304n3; contents summarized, 274-76; copyright, 102, 105, 167, 304, 419; early editions, 128-29; extracts published by Abner Cole, 425, 426-28; in harmony with Bible, 23; plot to destroy manuscript, 425; preface, 423; referred to as "Golden Bible," 103, 107, 288, 303, 331, 332, 431; revelation to sell copyright in Canada, 180, 197-99, 199n18, 258-59, 259n11, 328, 328n8, 329, 333-34, 340-41, 428; said to have been written by Cowdery, 290; sale price reduced, 285-86, 304, 304n6, 454; sale of, 429; Spaulding theory regarding, 24n19, 86, 94, 128, 132, 153n13, 156, 195-96; Stowell plans to buy $500 worth, 425; Testimony of Three Witnesses, 10, 13, 22n15, 39, 47, 65-66, 97, 118, 132, 142, 147, 193, 200, 224, 227, 238, 243, 244, 282, 325, 345-47; title page, 272, 345; title page published in *Wayne Sentinel,* 420. *See also* plates (of gold); Testimony of Three Witnesses

—printer's manuscript, in David Whitmer's possession, 19, 23, 19n3, 29, 33, 46, 47-49, 79, 117-18, 141, 159; description of, 102, 108, 112, 115, 141; examined by RLDS committee, 123-29, 133; given to David Whitmer by Oliver Cowdery, 46, 52, 79, 120, 167; given to Oliver Cowdery by Joseph Smith, 120; incorrectly believed to contain handwriting of minor scribes, 29, 32, 33, 47, 53, 112, 115, 129-30, 156, 166-67; mostly in Oliver Cowdery's handwriting, 52, 53, 59, 106, 220; prepared by Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, and unknown scribe, 29n6, 47n23, 112n2, 156n23, 423, 424; punctuation and capitalization added by typesetter, 117-18n2

—printing of, 3, 4, 22, 77, 125, 130, 197, 200, 210, 268, 268n3, 285, 293, 332, 338, 338n8, 340, 418, 421, 422, 423, 424; binding, 429; finished, 429; Martin Harris mortgages farm for, 87, 156, 197-98, 197n12, 199, 285, 285n22, 285n24, 333, 333n2, 334, 423, 454; at office of *Wayne Sentinel,* 285n22; progresses slowly, 425; proofed by Oliver Cowdery, 121; typeset by John H. Gilbert, 286, 426

—translation of, 231, 373n48; begun in Harmony, 3; by means of seer stone, 15, 59-60, 61, 85-86, 293, 329, 332; completed in Fayette, 3, 9, 21, 137; first part probably burned by Lucy Harris, 155n20; from reformed Egyptian, 18, 63, 78, 102-103, 131, 133, 154, 177, 213; Martin Harris loses first part, 15, 155, 155n20, 183; takes about three months, 153n14. *See also* seer stone; urim and thummim

Booth, Ezra, 307n7, 308-10, 346

Braden, Clark, 117
Brackenbury, "Lettie," 223
Brand, E. C., 224, 242, 250
breastplate, 35, 38, 131
Bridgman, Peter, 399
Briggs, Edmund C., 119-22
Brigham Young University, 47n23
Brighamites, 23
Bronson, Birdseye, 267
Bronson, Isaac, 267
Bruce, Eli, 447
Buchanan, George W., 71, 225, 227
Buffalo (NY), 5, 337, 455
Bullock, Thomas, 240
Bunnell, David E., 373n48
Bunnell, Eve, 373n48
Bunnell, Joshua, 373n48
Bunnell, Sarah (Conrad), 373, 373n48
Burns (NY), 65
Burroughs, Anna, 373, 373n43
Burroughs (Burrows), Philip, 289, 289n14, 317, 369n22, 373n43, 440
Burt, Ontario County (NY), 392, 393. *See* Manchester, Ontario County (NY)
Butler, Charles, 454

Cadwell, Phineas, 221
Caffall, James, 218-19
Caldwell County (MO), 62, 82
Caldwell County Sentinel, 245
California, 128, 182
Calvin, Johannes, 270
Canaan (NY), 318n9, 322n1, 368, 368n18, 442
Canada, 180, 197-99, 199n18, 240-41, 258-59, 259n11, 328, 328n8, 329, 333-34, 428. *See also* Smith, Joseph, Jr. (revelations of)
Canandaigua (NY), 303, 305, 306n5, 371, 398, 446, 449, 450, 451, 452
Canaseraga (NY), 65
Cannon, Adrian, 111
Cannon, Angus M., 225
Cannon, Ann (Quayle), 111
Cannon, David H., 217-18
Cannon, Donald Q., 350n18
Cannon, George, 111
Cannon, George Q., 12n2, 106, 111-16
Canton (IL), 242
Cantwell, L. C., 70
Carlisle (PA), 278n23
Carrol County (MO), 15
Carter, Jared, 373, 373n41, 453, 456
Cayuga Bridge, 455
Cayuga Canal, 5
Cayuga Lake, 3, 22, 73, 104, 104n14, 107, 130, 455
Chamberlain, Harrison, 5, 296-97, 298
Chamberlain, Hope (Haskins), 366
Chamberlain, Jacob B., 296, 331, 331n2
Chamberlain, Jacob P., 331n2
Chamberlain, Joseph, 434
Chamberlain, Orrin, 289, 289n13, 373, 373n44
Chamberlain, Solomon, 365, 365-66n11
Chandler, Neal, 271, 274n14, 275n16
Chase, Willard, 390, 393, 396, 400, 403, 431
Chatburn, Jonas W., 93-94
Chenango, Broome County (NY), 413
Chenango County (NY), 398, 399, 435
Chicago (IL), 50, 119, 151, 183
Chicago Historical Society, 172
Chicago Inter-Ocean, 172, 173
Chicago Times, interview with David Whitmer (1875), 17-24, 25-26, 58; (1881), 83-88; (1885), 150-58, 166; (1888), 209-10
Child, Jacob T., 17, 22, 22n16, 42, 42n4, 42n8, 49, 53, 70, 123, 124n1, 126, 183
Child, Susan, 42n8
Church of Christ, 18, 22, 23, 59, 69, 78, 86, 117, 137, 140, 141, 156, 157, 181, 193, 197, 200, 201, 203, 204, 208, 235, 276, 353, 356, 357. *See also* Church of

the Latter-day Saints; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 18, 140n3, 322, 337. *See also* Church of Christ; Church of the Latter-day Saints

—membership (6 April 1830), 363; (9 June 1830), 277n46, 351n24, 364-66, 432; (26 September 1830), 351, 366-69, 443; (between September 1830 and spring 1831), 369-75, 445

Church of the Latter-day Saints, 140n3, 208. *See also* Church of Christ; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Clark, Hyrum, 31, 31n18, 33

Clark, John A., 405

Clark, Thankful, 31n18

Clawson, Hiram B., 336

Clay County (MO), 231

Cleveland (OH), 117, 283

Clinton, DeWitt, 287n2

Clinton County (NY), 337

Cobb, James T., 333-35

Coe, Joseph, 323, 323n8, 372, 372n36

Colburn, Emily, 371, 371n33, 434

Coldwater (MI), 92

Cole, Abner, 259n11, 425, 426-28, 431, 432, 433

Colesville, Broome County (NY), 189, 306n5, 337, 337n5, 399, 401, 433, 436, 437, 448, 454; baptisms, 367, 369, 370, 371, 373, 374-75, 434, 435, 444, 446, 453; branch of church established, 201; church members move to Ohio, 454-56; Hyrum Smith and family move to (1830), 4, 312n2; Joseph Smith arrested and tried (1830), 435-36; Joseph Smith confirms members of the church in, 440-41; Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon visit, 237-38, 237n12, 305, 450, 452; Joseph Smith visits Joseph Knight, asks for money, 412; Joseph Smith works for Joseph Knight (1826-27), 401; Joseph Smith writes letter to believers in, 439; Newel Knight exorcism, 431, 436; Orson Pratt's mission to, 323, 449; persecution, 434; Sidney Rigdon preaches in, 452

Colorado, 242

Columbia College (University), 154, 355, 407

Community of Christ, 11n2, 355. *See also* Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

compass. *See* liahona

Congregational Church, 377

Connecticut, 267

Contributor, 95, 359

Cook, Lyndon W., 11, 11n2, 89, 111, 165n2, 194, 349n10, 350n18

Corrill, John, 241, 241n2, 257n3

Council of Fifty, 312

Covert, Seneca County (NY), 267, 269

Covill, James, 372, 372n37, 451

Cowdery, Elizabeth Ann (Whitmer), 4, 5, 37, 37n2, 242, 242n1, 260, 293, 329, 365, 431

Cowdery, Keziah (Pearce, Austin), 370, 370n27

Cowdery, Oliver, 20, 29, 66, 76, 86, 154, 173, 179n22, 196, 207, 209, 217, 224, 258, 260, 277, 282, 311, 329, 437; apostle, 316, 316n3, 320; elder (designated as), 348n3, 349, 350; founding member (one of six elders) according to David Whitmer, 30, 32, 33, 78, 188, 189, 200, 293, 338; handles plates, 141; handwriting on printer's manuscript of Book of Mormon, 29n6, 47n23, 52, 53, 59, 106, 112n2, 156n23; makes copy of the Testimony of Three Witnesses, 48n24, 53, 325, 345; never denies testimony, 25, 117, 118, 120-21, 195, 243; ordains Joseph Smith "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator," 202, 203, 204, 227, 328; "peculiar," in David Whitmer's opinion, 37; prophecies of, 199; receives printer's manuscript from Joseph Smith, 120; said to have written Book of Mormon, 290; receives seer stone from Joseph Smith, 179, 199-200, 214, 430; second elder, 353, 356, 357; testimony of, heard by

Edward Stevenson, 161, 163; trip to Canada to sell Book of Mormon copyright, 198, 258, 328, 328n8, 334, 340-41, 428; uses the term urim and thummim (1834), 59n4; witness (one of three) to Book of Mormon, 65, 68, 238, 295, 325, 345-47; writes history (since lost), 234n2

—activities, Palmyra/Manchester (NY), 152; learns about plates while boarding with Smiths, 152n7, 412; teaches school, 103, 107, 176; meets David Whitmer, 3, 9, 54, 74, 103, 152, 152n7, 176n13; visits to oversee printing of Book of Mormon, 121, 421, 422, 424; prepares printer's manuscript, 423, 424; buys large Bible from Egbert Grandin, 424; receives letters from Joseph Smith, 424-25; from Thomas Marsh, 425; writes to Joseph Smith (November 1829), 425; (December 1829), 426; discovers (with Hyrum Smith) Abner Cole's plan to publish extracts from Book of Mormon, 425-26; visits cave in hill Cumorah with Joseph Smith, 34-35; performs baptisms, 352, 370n28, 430

—activities, Harmony (PA), 433; visits Joseph Jr. with Samuel Smith (April 1829), 9, 21, 103, 107, 152n7, 152n10, 414; acts as witness to land transaction between Isaac Hale and Joseph Smith, 414; works as Joseph Smith's scribe, 21, 26, 40, 44, 60, 75, 133, 414; has private thoughts read by Joseph Smith, 9, 44, 51, 103, 107, 415; corresponds with David Whitmer, 3, 9, 44, 51, 54, 81, 103, 107, 152n7, 176, 187, 189, 212, 414-15, 416; expresses desire to translate, 415; baptized by Joseph Smith, 137n10, 329, 363, 415-16; ordained (with Joseph Smith) by John the Baptist, 329, 329n9, 415-16; requests refuge in Fayette on Joseph Smith's behalf, 9, 54, 103, 107, 417

—activities, Colesville (NY): performs baptisms, 367n16, 434; travels to, with Joseph Smith, 431; testifies at Joseph Smith's trial (1830), 436; receives ordination by Peter, James, and John while fleeing from, with Joseph Smith, 218, 227, 436-37

—activities, Fayette (NY), 262; said to have taught school in, 289, 289n16, 295, 295n22; visits Whitmers on way to Harmony, Pennsylvania (April 1829), 3, 21, 44, 51, 54, 75, 414; transported to (with Joseph Smith) by David Whitmer (June 1829), 9, 10, 21n9, 31n13, 44-45, 51-52, 55-56, 75-76, 103-104, 136-37, 152n7, 153, 160, 187, 192, 212, 262, 417; with Joseph Smith and David Whitmer when Nephite is seen on the road, 30-31, 44-45, 51-52, 55-56, 160, 187, 189, 191, 192; writes for Joseph Smith, 84, 86, 105, 108, 121-22, 134, 153, 154, 160, 195, 196, 210, 227, 288, 293, 298, 332, 417; performs baptisms (June 1829), 293, 293n10, 418; (April 1830), 4, 231, 364n7, 365n8, 430, 431; (September 1830), 316-17, 316n3, 320, 439; ordains Joseph Smith an elder, 136, 136n7, 137, 337, 419; receives revelation (through Joseph Smith) regarding calling of twelve apostles, 419; writes to Hyrum Smith, 420; revelation regarding building up the church, 420; vision of angel and gold plates (June 1829), 3, 9, 13, 29, 32, 32n19, 34, 43, 50-51, 77, 85, 100, 113, 115-16, 121, 134, 136, 146-47, 155-56, 160, 163, 176-77, 187, 212-13, 421; delivers first public sermon in (April 1830), 4, 293, 430; confirms members, 433; writes to Smith demanding change in a revelation, 437; attends conferences (9 June 1830), 349, 350, 432; (26 September 1830), 350-51; serves as clerk of conference, 351; drafts priesthood licenses, 352, 357, 359; performs ordinations, 349, 351; instructed by revelation to con-

front Hiram Page about false revelations, 309-10
—activities, Ohio and Missouri: mission to Indians, 82, 86, 234, 312n2, 313n3, 351, 445; baptizes Sidney Rigdon, 359; ordains Sidney Rigdon an elder, 235, 359; writes to Joseph Smith, 446, 448; transports revelations to Missouri, 231; marries Elizabeth Ann Whitmer, 37, 37n2, 151, 151n3; excommunicated, 174n5; lives briefly in Wisconsin, 327, 327n6; practices law in Tiffin (OH), 37, 37n3; deathbed testimony of, 68, 105, 108, 195, 223; charges David Whitmer to keep records, 46, 52; death and burial in Richmond (MO), 32, 34, 37, 43, 50, 68, 130, 157, 174-75, 218, 242-43
Cranmer, J. J., 341
Crowley, George W., 69
Culver, Aaron, 367, 370n29, 434, 444
Culver, Esther (Peck), 367, 434
Cumorah, hill (Manchester, NY), 174; angel on road to, 45, 51, 55; David Whitmer visits, 19, 24, 24n18, 39-40, 130-31, 131n17, 153; Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery visit cave in, 34-35; Joseph Smith visits (1823), 19-20; place of extraction of gold plates seen by Joseph Smith's neighbors, 74, 81, 84, 103, 107, 152; plates kept in another nearby hill, 39; plates deposited in, 19, 78, 85, 133, 153

Daggett, Levi, 430, 432, 433, 434, 438, 441, 443, 446
Dartmouth College, 382
Daughters of the American Revolution, 182
Davidson, James, 435, 436
Davis, Charles A., 234
Davis, D. F., 222
Davis, James A., 70
deacon(s), 141
Decatur County (IA), 135
De Mill, Anna (Knight), 369, 369n23, 369n24, 369n25
De Mill, Freeborn, 369, 369n23, 369n24, 369n25, 454
Derryfield (NH), 377
Des Moines Daily News, 171n2
Deseret News, 36, 101, 105n20, 145n13, 187, 247
Dewey Hill, Royalton County (VT), 381
DeYoe, Grattis C., 299n8
DeZeng, Philip, 399
Dickinson, Ellen E., 65, 281-86
Doctrine and Covenants, 60, 60n5, 205, 206, 207, 234, 440
Doniphan, Alexander W., 70, 70n1, 126, 126n2
Dunbar, D. C., 171, 171n2, 174
Dunbarton (NH), 377
Dunkirk (NY), 456
Dunn, George W., 70
Duntz, Miss, 297n1
Durfee, Lemuel, Jr., 427
Durfee, Lemuel, Sr., 399, 400, 402, 408, 409, 410-11, 412, 414, 419, 422, 424, 432

Eddy, Casper W., 390-91
Eddy, Ira, 308, 309, 310
Eggleston, Michael, 427
eight witnesses, 11, 37, 38, 39, 43, 47, 53, 77, 77n17, 175, 191, 222, 231, 232, 238, 249, 303, 304, 304n2, 304n4, 320, 326, 421-22
elder(s), 11, 23, 29n7, 48, 78, 79, 79n27, 90, 93, 94, 94n1, 119n2, 124, 136n7, 137, 137n9, 141, 157, 176, 180, 187, 189, 190, 200, 200n26, 200-201n28, 201, 203, 206, 207, 215, 221, 222, 231, 233, 235, 235n7, 250, 305, 306n3, 316n3, 317, 321, 322, 323, 323n3, 348, 348n3, 349, 350, 351, 353, 356, 357-58, 368n17, 419, 432, 439, 443, 448, 450
Elkhorn (WI), 327n6
Ellisburg (NY), 89n2

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 68, 195
Erie Canal, 3, 5, 398, 455
Etzenhouser, Rudolph, 119-22, 119n2
The Evening and the Morning Star, 59n3, 311, 366
Evertson, Nicholas, 390-91
Ewing, Warren, 49
Excelsior Springs, Ray County (MO), 255
exhortation, 350, 350n18

Fairport (OH), 5, 455, 456
Fairview (MO), 62
Fall, Captain, 123, 124
Fall River Herald, 25, 26
Far West (MO), 157, 163, 185, 211, 231, 232, 233, 240, 242, 244, 248, 249, 250, 251, 255, 348
Far West Record, 5, 348-51, 440, 443
Faris, John T., 126
Farmington, Ontario County (NY), 391, 392. *See also* Manchester, Ontario County (NY)
Fayette, Seneca County (NY), 255, 270, 281, 282, 284n17, 285, 287, 290n19, 298, 311, 323, 337, 339, 425, 432-33, 437, 439, 440, 445, 447, 450, 452; baptisms, 3, 4, 9, 94n1, 231, 235n7, 283, 283n15, 284, 284n18, 293, 293n10, 294, 294n13, 294n14, 297, 297n3, 298, 299, 316, 316n3, 317, 320, 332, 336, 337, 338, 359, 363, 364-69, 372, 373, 418, 430, 431, 432, 439, 450; branch of church, 201; center of Mormon activities, 4, 237n10; Christian Whitmer serves as constable, 183n4; church conferences, 3, 4, 94n1, 237, 294, 297, 305, 323, 348-51, 353, 356, 357, 358, 363, 364, 366n12, 432, 440, 442-43, 446, 451; church meetings, 293; church members move to Ohio, 455; history published by Diedrich Willers, Jr., 287, 292-95; Joseph Smith works on Bible revision, 448, 449-50; Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery move to (June 1829), 9, 10, 31n13, 75-76, 136-37; Joseph and Emma Smith move to (September 1830), 4, 295, 441-42; Joseph Smith's possible early money digging in, 287-88, 297, 298, 331; not location of church's organization, 3, 4, 22n14, 292, 292n1, 336, 337; persecution, 314; preaching, 294, 440; revelations, 3, 446; secret meetings, 312-15, 316-17; Sidney Rigdon ordains Edward Partridge an elder, 359, 450; translation of Book of Mormon completed, 3, 9, 21, 21n9, 137, 421; translation of Book of Mormon takes one month, 76, 197, 227; translation of Book of Mormon in general, 3, 59, 177, 191, 196, 212, 293; vision of three witnesses, 3-4, 9, 308-309, 325-26, 345; visited by Parley Pratt, 316-19, 439; visited by Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge, 4, 203, 235-36, 305, 359; visited by David Marks, 303-304; visited by Orson Pratt, 322-23, 445-46; Whitmer home, 3, 4, 75n8, 152n7, 176n13, 331; Whitmers move to (1809), 6, 73n1, 130. *See also* West Fayette, Seneca County (NY)
Fenn, Lucius, 5, 267-69
First Presidency, 312
Firth, Edith G., 259n11
Fish, Abraham, 402, 412, 424, 427, 432
Fishing River (MO), 257
Follett, Benjamin, 290n19
Forscutt, Mark H., 219, 242-43
Freemason(s), 267-68
French, J. H., 285, 285n22
Fuller, Orill, 65, 65n2
Fun, I. C., 245-46

Galien (MI), 89, 89n2
Gamber, Henry, 290
Garner, H. C., 70
Gates, Sister, 224-25
Geauga County (OH), 235
Geneva (NY), 22, 73, 303

German Reformed Church, 9, 270, 271, 277, 278, 282, 292

Gilbert, E. S., 65-67

Gilbert, John H., 102, 117, 117-18n2, 197n12, 286, 407, 418, 421, 423, 426, 428

Giles, Colonel, 123, 124

Gilsum (NH), 377, 391, 451

Glendale (CA), 171

Godmanchester (England), 242

Grandin, Egbert B., 285, 293, 340, 405, 418, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 427, 428, 454

Green, John P., 216

Greenwood, John, 395

Gurley, Zenas H., 119n2, 135-38

Hager, Albert D., 172

Hale, Alvah, 129-30, 405, 406

Hale, David, 441

Hale, Elizabeth, 439

Hale, Isaac, 412, 426; boards the Stowell-Smith money-digging company, 398; at church when Joseph Smith elopes with daughter, 401; confronts Joseph Smith about stealing his daughter and digging for money, 402; forbids golden plates being kept at home, 406; Joseph and Emma move in, 406; sells land to son-in-law, 414, 415, 416, 431, 434, 438-39

Hale, Jesse, 406

Hall, Levi, 367, 367n16, 434

Hall, Wilford A., 296-97n1

Hamilton (MO), 62

Hamiltonian, 62, 68

Hancock County (IL), 135

Hannibal (MO), 341

Harber, Martha, 15

Harlan (IA), 93

Harmony, Susquehanna County (PA), 306n4, 425, 426, 427, 433, 436, 439; baptisms, 363; Joseph Smith's land assessed, 407, 412, 426, 449; Joseph Smith and company lodge with Isaac Hale, 398; Joseph Smith returns with Samuel Lawrence, 400; Joseph and Emma Smith move to (December 1827), 20-21, 20n7, 292-93, 406; Joseph Smith purchases land from father-in-law, 414, 415, 416, 431, 438-39; Joseph Smith appears in 1830 census, 437; Joseph Smith returns to (October 1829), 21n9; Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery leave, with help from David Whitmer (June 1829), 9, 10, 31n13, 136-37, 187; Joseph Smith searches for buried treasure for Josiah Stowell (1825), 396, 398; Joseph and Emma Smith move from (September 1830), 295, 441-42; Oliver Cowdery moves to (April 1829), 9, 75n8, 152n7, 152n10; persecution, 441; Stowell-Smith money-digging company formed, 398; translation of Book of Mormon, 3, 20n7, 408; visited by Martin Harris and Hyrum Smith, 408; visited by Martin and Lucy Harris, 407-408; visited by David Whitmer (June 1829), 44, 51, 54, 75, 81, 104n14, 130, 187; visited by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, 452

Harding, Stephen S., 424

Harpersville (OH), 241n2

Harrington, Constable, 433, 441

Harrington, Margaret G., 165

Harris, Abigail, 408

Harris, Emer, 373, 373n40

Harris, Lucy, 155n20, 407, 413

Harris, Martin, 20, 29, 33, 66, 76, 86, 173, 196, 199, 207, 218, 224, 258, 259, 259n11, 372n38, 373n40, 405, 424, 425, 431; death of, 38; excommunicated, 175; founding member of church (one of six elders), according to David Whitmer, 78, 188, 189; has copy of Joseph Smith's Canadian revelation, 328n8, 335n11, 341; immigrates to Utah, 29, 175; maintains testimony until death, 25, 195; testimony of, heard by Edward Stevenson, 161, 163; witness to

Book of Mormon (one of three), 65, 68, 238, 295, 325, 345-47

—activities, Palmyra/Manchester (NY): learns about gold plates from brother Preserved, 405; visited by Lucy Smith, 405; gives Joseph Jr. fifty dollars, 405; visited by Joseph Sr. and Lucy, who ask for money, 407; expresses hope of making money from Book of Mormon, 408; loses translation manuscript, 15, 76-77, 155, 155n20, 178-79, 183n6, 188, 214, 327, 408, 409; testifies at trial in Lyons, 413; helps Joseph Smith negotiate printing of Book of Mormon, 418; mortgages farm to print Book of Mormon, 87, 156, 197-98, 197n12, 199, 285, 285n22, 285n24, 333, 333n2 334, 423, 454; plans to pick up Joseph Smith's horse in Harmony (PA), 425; signs agreement with Joseph Sr. to divide revenue from Book of Mormon sales, 427, 428; sued by Abner F. Lakey and James S. Stoddard, 428; baptism, 364, 364n5, 364n6, 430; receives priest's license, 349; receives revelation (through Joseph Smith) to sell property, 429-30; receives letter from Joseph Smith in Ohio, 454; visits Charles Butler for loan, 454; sells farm to Thomas Lakey, 454; leads group to Ohio, 456

—activities, Harmony (PA): takes Book of Mormon characters to scholars, 78, 98, 102, 107, 112, 115, 131, 154, 159n3, 167, 177, 183n6, 186, 188, 196, 407; travels to with wife, 407; works as Joseph Smith's scribe (1828), 21, 21n8, 26, 40, 76, 188, 408; comments on Book of Mormon translation, 273, 273n7, 329; switches Joseph Smith's seer stone with another, 188; handles covered plates, 141; visits Joseph Smith with request to see plates, 413

—activities, Fayette (NY): vision of angel and gold plates (June 1829), 3, 9, 113, 134, 146, 155-56, 217, 220, 421; views plates separately from David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery, 32, 32n19, 38-39, 39n6, 44, 85, 113, 116, 134, 134n3, 345; gives description of plates that differs from David Whitmer's, 14; gives description of vision that differs from that of David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery, 44; describes vision of plates in metaphysical terms, 38, 193, 347

Harris, Peter, 424

Harris, Preserved, 372, 372n38, 405, 453

Harrisburg, Dauphin County (PA), 9, 22, 73, 130, 211, 247n1

Hart, James H., 95-110

Hatch, Ebenezer, 435

Hebrew, 131

Hendrix, Daniel, 298n2

Herrick, William S., 318, 318n7

high council, 231

high counselor(s), 206, 206n32

high priest(s), 23, 93, 203, 204, 206, 206n31, 255, 308

high priesthood, 11, 69, 141, 180, 203, 206; president of, 206, 206n32

Hindee, Daniel, 388

Hine, W. R., 155n20, 401

History of Seneca County (NY), 285, 331-32

Hittites, 290, 290n22

Holman, W. A., 70

Holman, W. R., 71

Hooper, Pontius, 296

Howe, Eber D., 13-14, 200n25, 305, 452

Hubble, Janie, 182

Hubble, Martin J., 182-92

Hudson (MI), 287

Hughes, C. J., 70

Hughes, J. S., 70

Hughes, James, 70

Hulett, Francis, 283n17

Humphrey, Solomon, 372, 372n34

Huntingdon County (England), 95

Hurlbut, Jeremiah, 385-90

Hurlbut, Samuel, 267
Hussee, Isaac, 424
Hyde Park (UT), 193

Illinois, 25, 54, 148
Independence, Jackson County (MO), 15, 25, 59, 93, 119n2, 128, 161, 168, 244, 327
Ingersoll, Peter, 402, 406
Instructor, 148n15, 187
interpreters. *See* urim and thummim
Ithaca (NY), 454
Ivins, Stanley S., 267

Jackson, John, 247n1
Jackson, Sarah, 247n1
Jackson County (MO), 11, 37n2, 73, 211, 211n2, 231, 241n2, 249
Jackways, William, 388
Jacobs, Henry C., 336, 337, 337n4
Jahn, Johann, 326n5
Jaredite(s), 21, 329
Jennings, Samuel, 389, 390, 392
Jenson, Andrew, 226, 251, 261-63, 336
Jenson, M. Minerva, 336
Jerusalem, 21, 154, 156, 163, 184, 184n9, 206
Jerusalem Church, 282, 284
Jessee, Dean C., 283n16
John the Baptist (as an angel), 137, 329, 329n9, 415
Johnson, Dr., 260
Johnson, James Edward, 247n1
Johnson, Joe, 212, 212n3
Johnson, Marie Louise (Cowdery), 95, 260
Jolly, Elizabeth, 4, 283, 283n15, 293, 365, 431
Jolly, Harriet, 366, 432
Jolly, John, 366, 432
Jolly, Julia Ann. *See* Whitmer, Julia Ann (Jolly)
Jolly, Vincent, 4, 293, 365, 431
Jolly, William, 4, 11, 283, 283n15, 284, 293, 332, 365, 431
Jolly family, 282, 295
Josephites, 141, 188
Journal and Courier, 109
Junius, Seneca County (NY), 298, 332

Kansas City (MO), 114, 166, 167, 190
Kansas City Journal: interviews with David Whitmer, 72-80; David Whitmer writes to, complaining of errors, 81-82
Kelley, Edmund L.: writes to David Whitmer, 117; receives letter from David Whitmer, 117-18
Kelley, William H., 89-94, 123, 125, 128, 223
Kendig, Daniel S., 285, 331, 331n1
Kendig Creek, 284, 284n18, 294, 294n14, 296
Kerr, C. W., 247n1
Kime, Edna, 297n1
Kingdom, Seneca County (NY), 289n13, 296-97, 297n1, 297n3, 298, 299. *See also* Waterloo, Seneca County (NY)
Kingston (Ontario, Canada), 199n18, 258, 259n11, 328n8, 334, 334n5, 340, 428
Kingston (MO), 245
Kingston Times, 62
Kinney, Jonathan, 381
Kirtland (OH), 65, 66, 79, 82, 86, 128, 140, 156, 173, 188, 196, 203, 210, 216, 217, 231, 239, 259, 313, 332, 336, 338, 339, 445, 448, 452-53, 454; banking crisis, 11, 141; David Whitmer moves to, 11, 211, 211n1; John Whitmer writes from, 453; Joseph Smith arrives in, 453; Joseph Smith moves to, 5, 203, 295, 324, 450; Oliver Cowdery writes from, 446, 448; said by Sidney Rigdon to be promised land, 310, 313n3; Sidney Rigdon returns to, 453
Knight, Elizabeth, 371, 371n31, 446
Knight, Joseph, Jr., 367, 434, 440

Knight, Joseph, Sr., 364n6, 374n53, 400, 401, 406, 435, 446, 452; baptism by Oliver Cowdery, 367, 434; hires legal counsel for Joseph Smith, 435; Joseph Smith works for (1826-27), 401; receives revelation through Joseph Smith, 417; takes supplies to Joseph Smith in Harmony (PA), 417; visited by Joseph Sr. and Samuel Smith, 412; visited by Joseph Jr., who asks for money, 412; is visiting Smiths when Joseph Jr. obtains the gold plates, 403, 404; visits Palmyra/Manchester with Joseph Smith (January 1830), 428; (March-April 1830), 429-30; visits Joseph Smith in Harmony, 414

Knight, Nahum, 374, 374n53, 374n54

Knight, Newel, 367n16, 370n29, 370n30, 371n31, 435, 436, 440, 442, 443, 444, 449, 453, 454; attends conference (26 September 1830), 351, 442; baptism by David Whitmer, 365, 365n9, 432; baptizes Emer Harris, 373n40; exorcized by Joseph Smith, 431, 436; faints, 433; Hyrum Smith and family move in with, 312n2, 443; ordained a priest by Oliver Cowdery, 351; transports Joseph and Emma Smith to Fayette (September 1830), 4; visits Joseph Smith in Harmony (PA), 439-40, 441

Knight, Polly, 367, 434

Knight, Polly (Peck), 367, 434, 446

Knight, Sally (Colburn), 367, 367n16, 371n31, 371n33, 434, 439-40, 441

Knight, Thankful, 374, 374n54

Lafity, Dr., 240

Lakey, Abner F., 428, 447

Lakey, Thomas, 454, 455

Lamanites, 120, 181, 235, 275

Lambert, Joseph R., 119n2

Lamoni (IA), 127

Lancashire (England), 93

Lane, Jesse, 439

Lansing, Richard R., 167, 419

Lavonia (NY), 404

Lawrence, Samuel, 396, 400, 404

Lebanon (NH), 382, 383

Lenawee County (MI), 295

Levites, 290, 290n22

Lewis, David, 336-39

Lewis, Hiel, 409

Lewis, Joseph, 409

Lewis, Lemuel, 336, 336n3

Lewis, Sophia, 408-409

Lewis, Weighty Selecta (Stanton), 336-37

Lewis, William, 250-51

Lexington (KY), 336

Lexington (MO), 89, 111, 113, 161-62, 165

liahona (director, compass), 29, 32, 43, 48, 51, 77, 91, 113, 116, 121, 160, 162, 163, 177, 187

Liahona, 145n13

Lilly, Asa, 388

Lindsay, Martin L., Jr., 336

Liverpool (England), 111, 187

Livonia (NY), 435, 438, 444, 447

Logan Journal, 187

London (England), 95

Los Angeles (CA), 54, 57

Loveland, Otis, 397

Luther, Martin, 270

Lutherans, 270, 276

Lyons (NY), 303, 413, 455

Macedon, Wayne County (NY), 323n8, 453; baptisms in, 372; Joseph and Emma visit, 443, Joseph Smith works in, 403

Mack, Almira, 311, 368, 368n19, 373n42

Mack, Daniel, 380

Mack, Jason, 379

Mack, Lydia, 387

Mack, Orlando, 387

Mack, Solomon, Jr., 387, 451

Mack, Solomon, Sr., 380, 381, 391

Mack, Stephen, 311, 368n19

Mack, Temperance, 311, 368n19

Manchester (NH), 377

Manchester, Ontario County (NY), 152, 152n8, 189, 210, 238n13, 259n11, 305, 311, 368n19, 383, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 420, 437, 444, 447; baptisms, 353, 364, 370, 374, 430, 444; branch of church, 201; church organized in (April 1830), 4, 22, 22n14, 363; eight witnesses see gold plates, 421-22; formerly called Farmington, then Burt (1821-22), 391-92, 393; hill Cumorah located in, 19, 78; Hyrum Smith taxed, 436; Hyrum Smith moves from (September/October 1830), 4; Joseph Jr. and Emma move to (1827), 401; Joseph Jr. finds gold plates (1823), 273, 394; Joseph Jr. persecuted, 20; Joseph Jr. moves from (December 1827), 20, 20n7; Joseph Jr. receives revelation to sell copyright of Book of Mormon in Canada, 258, 428; Lamanite mission launched from, 444-45; Lucy Smith moves from (November 1830), 296; Oliver Cowdery boards with Smiths, 152n7; Parley Pratt arrives, 316, 439; Smith property assessed (1821-29), 392, 393; Smiths build cabin and move onto property (1822/23), 18, 18n1; Smiths purchase land (1820/21), 391; Smiths enumerated in 1820 census, 391

Mandeville (MO), 61

Markel, Jake, 287n3

Markel, John, 287, 287n3

Marks, David, 303-304, 430

Marks, S. R., 222-23

Merrimack River, 377

Marsh, Elizabeth (Godkin), 368, 368-69n21

Marsh, Thomas B., 54, 217, 368, 368n20, 369n21, 425, 439, 455

Marshall, Elihu F., 418

Marshall, William, 140, 140n1

Marshall, William A., 287

Mason county (KY), 126n2

Massachusetts, 425

Matthews, Robert J., 433

McAuley, Thomas, 424

McDowell, J. Frank, 223

McGinnis, Thomas, 71

McIntosh, Alexander, 395

McIntyre, Alexander, 447

McKinstry, Mrs., 67, 67n8

McKune, Joseph, Jr., 452

McLellin, William E., 260, 334, 334n8; comments on Smith's Canadian revelation, 199n19, 259n11, 334-35, 335n11, 340, 341; comments on alterations to Joseph Smith's revelations, 335; joins David Whitmer's splinter church, 11; questions Joseph Smith's and Oliver Cowdery's claims to angelic ordinations, 329, 329n9, 415; receives letters from Hiram Page, 255-56, 257-59; records David Whitmer's testimony, 216, 220; writes to Joseph Smith III, 327-30

Mayer, Lewis, 270, 278, 278n23

Melchizedek priesthood, 136, 136nn6-7, 180, 207, 227

Mennonites, 278

Mentor (OH), 447

mesmerism, 63

Messenger and Advocate, 231, 239

Metcalf, Anthony, 10, 193

Metcalf neighborhood, 381

Methodist(s), 10, 63, 278, 396, 401, 409

Michigan, 66, 128, 140, 287

Millennial Star, 185, 187

Miller, Dr., 171

Miller, Martin, 294

Miner's Hill (Manchester, NY), 39n7

"Missionaries Covenant," 445, 447

Missouri, 11, 42n4, 54, 56, 95, 126n2, 130, 164, 174, 174n5, 217, 231, 233, 255, 309, 312, 312n2, 313n3, 348

Mitchell, Peter, 396

Mitchell, Samuel L., 78, 102, 107, 131, 131n22

Moabites, 290, 290n22

Mohammed, 18

Monterey (CA), 111

Montrose (IA), 165
Moon, Henry, 218
Moravian Church, 294n15
Morley, Isaac, 216
Mormon War, 184
Moroni, 55, 97, 99, 146, 152, 153, 224, 261, 263, 350n18
Morris, Alvin L., 135
Morse, Michael, 60, 61, 409
Mortensen, A. Russell, 267
Mosby, W. W., 71
Mouch, S. T., 36, 72, 82n1, 222
Moyle, James Henry, 10, 12n2, 139-49, 166n3, 171
Mulder, William, 267
Mullin, Eri B., 15-16
Murdock, Squire, 383
Murphy, John, interviews David Whitmer, 9-10, 62-64, 68, 69
Musselman, Mary. See Whitmer, Mary (Musselman)

Nauvoo (IL), 128, 132, 173, 224, 291, 312, 332
Nauvoo House, 19n3, 111
Nebraska City (NE), 242
Neely, Albert, 400
Nelson (OH), 308, 309, 310
Nelson, Robert, 225
Nephi, 64, 256, 261
Nephite(s), 10, 11, 19, 31, 33, 85, 91, 120, 134, 152, 160, 163, 177, 196, 212, 215, 226, 248, 329, 432
Nevada, 128
Nevada County (CA), 119n2
Nevites, 290, 290n22
New England, 384
New Haven (CT), 109
New Jerusalem, 313n3
New Lebanon (NY), 318n7
New York, 4, 11, 21, 39, 73, 79, 83, 86, 101, 128, 132, 167, 292, 306n6, 307n7, 308, 309, 310, 313n3, 316, 320, 363
New York City, 49, 78, 102, 109, 131, 151, 159, 161, 183, 183n6, 186, 188, 196, 355, 391, 395, 407
New York Life Insurance and Trust Company, 454
Noble, George H., 438, 439, 452
Noble, Joel K., 436
North Carolina, 148n16
Norwich (VT), 383, 384

Ogden (UT), 36, 37, 165, 167
Ohio, 4, 128, 156, 231, 235, 237, 237n12, 255, 283, 290, 305, 306, 307n7, 310, 311, 313n3, 323, 329n9, 359, 367n16, 374n50, 375nn59-60, 452
Ohio Star, 308, 449
Omaha Herald, 171-81
Ontario County (NY), 18, 84, 133, 151, 209, 211
Ontario Phoenix, 455
Oregon, 128
Ovid (ID), 36, 247
Ovid (NY), 287n2

Page, Catharine (Whitmer), 4, 255, 283, 283n14, 293, 365
Page, Ezra, 373
Page, Hiram, 186, 227, 251, 278, 282; attends church conference (9 June 1830), 350; baptism by Oliver Cowdery, 4, 255, 293, 364, 430; biographical data, 255; botanical doctor, 283; goes to Canada to sell Book of Mormon copyright, 198, 199n18, 258-59, 334, 340-41, 428; marriage, 283; preaching, 284; prophecies of, 199; reaffirms testimony of Book of Mormon, 255-56; receives revelations through seer stone, 255, 309-10; receives teacher's license, 350; revelations denounced by Joseph Smith, 255, 442; sees angel, 256; withdraws from church, 255; witness of Book of Mormon (one

of eight), 11, 47, 53, 77, 161n5, 162, 238, 255, 310; writes to William McLellin, 255-56, 257-59

Page, Katharine, 430

Page, Mary, 4, 293n11, 365n7, 430

Page, Philander, 47, 47n21, 53, 161n5, 162n7, 180-81, 186, 186n2, 227, 251

Painesville (OH), 448

Painesville Telegraph, 452, 453

Palmer, W. M., 222

Palmyra, Wayne County (NY), 3, 22, 74, 84, 117, 133, 176, 176n13, 183, 187, 189, 190, 191, 212, 259n11, 285n22, 286, 287, 297, 298, 331, 340, 383, 387, 399, 400, 401, 407, 424, 425, 427, 429, 430, 447, 453, 454; baptisms, 372, 374; Book of Mormon printed, 3, 4, 21n9, 86, 125, 128, 130, 293; church meetings, 433; Joseph Sr. and Alvin Smith form partnership with Jeremiah Hurlbut, 385; Joseph Jr. confronts Abner Cole, 428; Joseph Sr.'s cabin mentioned in 1820 road survey, 390; Joseph Sr., Alvin, and Hyrum Smith appear on road lists (1817-22), 385, 388, 390, 392, 393; Lucy Smith (brother of Joseph Jr.) born, 392, 394; religious revival (1824-25), 390, 396; Sidney Rigdon visits en route to Fayette (NY), 235-36, 236n8; Sidney Rigdon preaches in, 451; Smiths live at west end of Main Street, 385, 388; Smiths move south to Samuel Jennings's property, 389, 390; Smiths first move to (1816), 18, 18n1, 384-85

Palmyra Reflector, 425, 426, 428, 453

Palmyra Young Men's Library Society, 451

Paris (IL), 216, 220

Parkman, Geauga County (OH), 283n16

Partridge, Edward, Jr., 359

Partridge, Edward, Sr., 5, 241n2; arrives in Fayette (NY) with Sidney Rigdon, 4, 86, 196, 203, 235-36, 305, 312n2, 359, 449; baptism, 235n7, 359, 450; receives a revelation through Joseph Smith, 449; ordained an elder, 235n7, 359

Peck, Electa (Buck), 371, 371n29

Peck, Ezekiel, 371, 371n29

Peck, Hezekiah, 367, 374n55, 434

Peck, Martha (Long), 367, 374n55, 434

Peck, Phebe (Crosby), 374, 374n56

Peck, Reed, 374, 374n55

Pennsylvania, 4, 51, 54, 75, 151, 209, 231, 271, 277, 293, 337, 373, 373n40, 424

Perkins, Professor, 382

Peter, James, and John (angels), 218, 227, 329n9, 436

Peters, Absalom, 448

Peters, James H., 221

Peterson, Ziba, attends conference (9 June 1830), 349; baptism by Oliver Cowdery, 4, 293n12, 365, 365n8, 431; an elder, 349; mission to Indians in Ohio and Missouri, 79, 82, 234, 445; prophecies of, 199; receives elder's license, 350

Phelps (NY), 303

Phelps, William W., 59n3, 59n4, 231, 313, 314, 326n5, 407, 450, 452-53, 455

Philadelphia (PA), 25, 42n4, 183, 183n6

Philadelphia Press, 171n2

Pierce, Helen Marr, 25

Pierce, Nathan, 427, 432, 433, 438, 441, 443, 446

Plano (IL), 128, 242, 249

plates (of brass), 32, 43, 50, 77, 91, 99, 160, 177, 213

plates (of gold), 127, 133, 146, 152n7, 153, 155, 272, 298, 402; appearance and dimensions, 13-14, 20, 38, 78, 85, 131, 152, 184, 210, 245, 248, 288, 326; buried in stone box (casket), 19, 24, 24n18, 78, 85; handled by Casper Yost, 288; by Josiah Stowell, 404; by William and Katharine Smith, 404; hidden in cooper's shop, 405; in Whitmer family barn, 45, 52; under hearth, 405; in custody of angel, 13, 166; Isaac Hale forbids Joseph Smith from keeping them in his home, 406; Joseph Smith discovers (1823), 3, 18, 84, 133-34, 176, 209, 285n22, 292, 297, 304, 394-95; Joseph Smith removes from hill (1827), 292-93, 403; Joseph

Smith transcribes characters from, 20n7, 78, 107, 112-13, 115, 131, 154, 177, 186, 213, 249, 250, 407; kept in cave near hill Cumorah, 39, 121; Lucy Harris searches for, 407; not present during translation, 15, 153n13, 154n16; a sealed portion, 13, 38, 85, 134, 152, 160, 161, 164, 191, 192, 210, 245, 263n9, 290; seen in vision by three witnesses, 3, 9, 13, 25-26, 32, 39, 135-36, 143, 155-56, 191, 193, 238, 308-309, 325-26, 345-47; seen by eight witnesses, 39, 77, 238, 326, 421-22; taken from Joseph Smith after loss of manuscript, 410; transported to Fayette (NY) by angel, 75n9, 160, 166, 192; transported to Harmony (PA) in barrel of beans, 406. *See also* Book of Mormon

Plattsburg Democrat, 212, 212n3

Polo (MO), 62, 64, 69

polygamy, 23, 23n17, 69, 90, 129, 132, 202, 209, 215, 281

Polynesia, 128

Pontiac (MI), 28, 163, 163n8, 311, 346

Poorman, John, 366, 373n45, 432

Poorman, Margaret, 373, 373n45

Porter, Larry C., 294n14, 296, 299n8, 368-69n21, 369n25, 434

Potsdam, St. Lawrence County (NY), 438

Poulson, P. Wilhelm, 36-40, 247-49

Pratt, Chauncy, 269, 269n4

Pratt, Moroni, 222

Pratt, Orson, 60, 79; attends conference in Fayette (NY), 323; baptized by brother Parley Pratt, 318, 318n9, 368, 368n18, 442; interviews David Whitmer, 41-57, 87, 104n14, 120, 129, 142n8, 175-76, 215, 220, 345; joins Samuel Smith and Joseph Coe in preparing church to move to Ohio, 323, 372n36; mission to Colesville (NY), 323, 449; ordained an elder by Joseph Smith, 323, 323n3, 448; ordained an apostle, 449; prophecies of, 199; receives revelation (through Joseph Smith), 323, 323n3, 446; receives correspondence from Edward Stevenson, 31-32; reminiscences, 322-24, 325-26; returns to Fayette with Hyrum Smith, 23, 449; travels with Samuel Smith to Ohio, 324; visits Fayette and meets Joseph Smith, 295, 322, 445-46

Pratt, Parley P., 60, 372n35; baptized by Oliver Cowdery 316, 316n3, 320, 368, 368n17, 439, 441-42; baptizes converts in Manchester (NY), 370n27, 444; baptizes in Fayette (NY), 317, 369; converts and baptizes brother Orson Pratt, 318, 318n9, 322, 322n1, 442; meets Hyrum Smith in Manchester, 316, 320; mission to Indians in Ohio and Missouri, 79, 82, 86, 234, 445; ordained an elder, 316n3, 317, 321, 368n17, 439; preaches in Fayette, 440, 441-42; prophecies of, 199; sees unusual atmospheric phenomenon, 319; visits Fayette with Hyrum Smith, 316-19, 320, 438, 439

Pratt, Thankful (Halsey), 372, 372n35

Pratz, John, 373

Presbyterian(s), 86, 151, 156, 277, 278, 425, 429

priest(s), 141, 201, 206, 311, 349, 351, 352, 432

printer's manuscript (of Book of Mormon). *See* Book of Mormon

"Proclamation" (of David Whitmer), 10, 62, 68-71, 122

Proper, Dolly, 370, 370n28

Proper, George, 370n28

The Prophet, 312

Prussia, 9n1

Purple, W. D., 400

Quaker, 9, 63, 418

Quessenberry, J. P., 71

Quincy (IL), 241n2

Quinn, D. Michael, 270, 271, 272n3, 273n7, 274n14, 278n23, 433

Quorum of Twelve, 25, 54, 188n15, 241

Randolph (VT), 378

Ravenna (OH), 308

Ray, Davies County (MO), 15

Ray County (MO), 157, 255

Rayburn, A. K., 71

Reed, John, 435, 436

Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 11n2, 15, 25, 89, 89n2, 93, 117, 119, 119n2, 123, 125, 127, 128, 129, 135, 173, 205, 234, 242, 244, 257, 355. *See also* Community of Christ

Revolutionary War, 151

Reynolds, Stanley I., 296n1

Richards, Charles C., 224

Richards, Franklin D., 161n5, 188, 224, 292, 292n1, 294n17, 294n18

Richards, Willard, 312, 384

Richmond, Ray County (MO), 22n16, 42nn4-8, 56, 69, 126n2, 132, 133, 140n1, 217, 232; David Whitmer dies in, 11, 215; David Whitmer writes from, 17; Great Cyclone of 1878, 41, 46, 49, 53, 79, 96, 98-99, 111, 114, 126, 147, 247-48; home of David Whitmer, 11, 17, 22, 23, 26, 28, 31, 33, 34, 37, 49, 58, 62, 70, 72, 83, 87, 89, 93, 97, 99, 110, 111, 114, 117, 118, 122, 123, 125, 126, 128, 129, 139, 140, 142, 144, 145, 147, 148, 150, 157, 158, 161, 163, 165, 168, 171, 172, 174, 175, 176, 180, 182, 185, 190, 208, 209, 211, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222, 226, 227, 260, 341; Jacob Whitmer dies in, 37; Oliver Cowdery dies in, 32, 50, 130, 175, 242-43

Richmond Conservator, 17, 22, 42n4, 183, 224

Richmond Democrat, 211-15

Richmond Whig, 42n4

Rigdon, Sidney, 5, 156, 282; arrives in Fayette (NY) with Edward Partridge, 4, 86, 196, 203, 235-36, 295, 305, 312, 312n2, 359, 449; baptized by Oliver Cowdery, 359, 447-48; believes Kirtland to be promised land, 310, 313n3; briefly excommunicated, 312; converted in Ohio, 235; demands that John Whitmer turn over church records, 233; letter of introduction written by Oliver Cowdery, 448; member of First Presidency, 312; member of secret Council of Fifty, 312; mentioned in Spaulding theory, 86-87, 156, 195-96; ordained an elder by Oliver Cowdery, 235; ordains Edward Partridge an elder, 450; preaches in Fayette, 284, 288; in Canandaigua and Palmyra, 451; writes letters to Ohio Saints, 305-307, 451; preaches in Joseph Knight's barn, 452; in Waterloo before leaving to Ohio, 453; public address regarding activities in New York, 312-15; receives revelation through Joseph Smith, 236, 449; resented by David Whitmer, 5, 180, 203-204, 207, 208; visions of, 307, 307n7, 310, 313, 313n3; visits branches of church with Joseph Smith, 236, 450; visits Harmony (PA) with Joseph Smith, 452; visits Colesville (NY) with Joseph Smith, 237-38, 237n12, 305, 450, 452; visits Palmyra (NY) on way to Fayette, 235, 236n8; wants Joseph Smith's revelations published (1831), 334, 340

Riley, I. Woodbridge, 226, 355

Risley, Sarah (Sally), 374, 374n51

Roberts, B. H., 223-24

Robinson, Cains, 395, 408, 410

Robinson, Ebenezer, 348

Robinson, Gain, 391, 402, 407-408, 409, 411, 412, 413, 414

Robinson, Gracie, 135

Rochester (NY), 35, 418, 424

Rochester Union Advertiser, 289n13

Rockwell, Caroline, 367

Rockwell, Electa, 367

Rockwell, Orin, 409, 411, 418-19

Rockwell, Orrin Porter, 367, 367n14, 409, 411, 419

Rockwell, Sarah (Witt), 364, 364n6, 420, 430

Rogers, Mr., 413

Royalton (VT), 379, 380, 381, 387

Rumsey, John A., 287n3

Sackett, Gary V., 296

Salisbury, Katharine (Smith), 366, 366nn12-13, 382, 383, 403, 432, 438, 451

Salisbury, Wilkins Jenkins, 451

Salt Lake City (UT), 17, 31, 31n18, 79, 106, 111, 125, 129, 139, 140, 157, 171, 172, 179, 200n25, 202, 214, 218, 261, 291, 292, 333, 336

Salt Lake Herald, 17

Salt Lake Tribune, 171n2

Saints' Herald, 11n2, 15, 25, 58, 60, 61, 66, 89, 93, 123, 127, 172, 173, 218, 219, 223, 245

Sandford, Broome County (NY), 434

Sandusky (OH), 188

Sandy Grove (TN), 34

Saranac (NY), 336, 337

Saunders, Benjamin, 397

Saunders, Enoch, 397

Saunders, Lorenzo, 24n18, 74n6, 370n28, 397, 403, 411

Saunders, Orlando, 411

Schott, Anne. *See* Whitmer, Anne (Schott)

Schott, Elizabeth. *See* Whitmer, Elizabeth (Schott)

Schott family, 281, 283, 285

Schroeder, Theodore A., 226, 333

Schweich, G. W. & Co., 41

Schweich, George W., 17, 42, 42n6, 43, 48, 49, 50, 53, 118, 157, 180, 226, 234, 341, 355

Schweich, Josephine, 50, 158

Schweich, Julia (Whitmer), 42n6, 74, 157

Scoby, William, 311, 373, 373n42

Scott, Walter, 290n21

Scribner's Monthly, 65, 65n1

seer stone, 72; Book of Mormon translated with, 15, 16, 27, 27n5, 134, 137-38, 169, 179, 293, 327, 329, 332; command to baptize received through, 415; description of, 60, 61, 76, 85, 134, 169, 179; given to Oliver Cowdery (ca. April 1830), 199-200, 207, 214, 430; Hiram Page receives revelations through, 255, 309-10; obtained by Joseph Smith when digging well for Willard Chase family, 393; ownership claimed by Chase, 393-94, 400; a second (white) stone used by Joseph Smith, 200n25; kept by Oliver Cowdery, Cowdery's widow, then Phineas Young, 179, 179n22, 200n25, 214; not used after church organized, 199-200, 214, 328; placed in hat during divination, 15, 21, 21n10, 59, 60-61, 76, 82, 104-105, 108, 113, 138, 154n15, 155, 169, 188, 196, 197, 198, 204, 227, 260, 323n3, 329, 332; referred to as "director," 260; revelations received through, 198, 205, 206, 207, 207n33, 323n3; sometimes confused with urim and thummim, 21n10, 59, 85, 155; used for treasure hunting, 297. *See also* urim and thummim

Seneca (MO), 97

Seneca (NY), 130

Seneca Canal, 5

Seneca County (NY), 23, 78, 196, 211, 268n1, 270, 281, 282, 283, 316, 316n3, 320, 359

Seneca Falls (NY), 22, 130, 289, 296, 297n3, 298, 331, 331nn1-2

Seneca Falls Historical Society, 292

Seneca Farmer, 268n1

Seneca Lake, 3, 22, 73, 130, 455; baptisms performed in, 3, 4, 9, 190, 231, 284n18, 293, 294n13, 316, 316n3, 320, 363n3, 364n7, 365n8, 365-66n11, 366n12, 368n17, 418, 431, 432, 439, 450

Seneca River, 22, 284n18, 294n14, 297n1

Seymour, James N., 219

Seymour, Zachariah, 391, 393, 394

Shady Grove (TN), 32

Sharon, Windsor County (VT), 18, 292, 379, 380

Shaw, S., 49

Shelby, O., 222

Shenandoah (IA), 242

Shendaken (NY), 303

Sherer, John, 371n33, 448

Shiley, George, 282n8, 284, 284n19

Shiley, Jacob, 281, 282, 282n8, 283, 284

Shurtliff, Lumon Andros, 216

Silver City (MO), 157

Silver Creek, 297, 297n3, 298

Skousen, Royal, 47n23, 112n2, 117-18n2, 156n23, 423n12

Slade, Benjamin, 375, 375n58, 375n59

Slade, Mary (Molly), 374, 374n57

Slade, Molly, 375n58

Slade, Roxy, 375, 375n59

Slaughter, Lewis, 71

Smith, Alexander H., 123, 125, 128

Smith, Alvin, 378; appears on Palmyra road list (1820-22), 390, 392, 393; becomes sick and dies, autopsy performed, 395; birth, 378; contracts (with father) for Manchester land, 391; evades arrest, 389; extended absence from Palmyra, 388-89; forms partnership (with father) with Jeremiah Hurlbut, 385; incurs debt with Gain Robinson, 391; intended to accompany brother Joseph to retrieve gold plates, 394; Hurlbut issues complaint against, 389; Joseph Sr. exhumes body of, 396; partnership with Hurlbut dissolves, 386-87, 387n6; runs store on Main Street, 390; sued by Hurlbut, 389; works to pay for property, 392

Smith, Alvin (infant of Emma and Joseph Smith), 408-409

Smith, Anna C. (Wright), 244

Smith, Asael, Jr., 352

Smith, Asael, Sr., 377, 378, 420, 438, 446

Smith, Don Carlos, 366, 383, 422, 438, 448

Smith, Elias A., 352

Smith, Emma (Hale), 29, 33, 76, 120, 178, 262, 400, 433, 436, 437, 447; accompanies husband to South Bainbridge (NY), 401; accompanies husband to hill to obtain gold plates, 396; baptized by Oliver Cowdery, 367, 434; confirmed in church, 439; describes method of Book of Mormon translation, 60-61, 329; gives birth to infant that then dies, 408-409; instructed to compile a hymnal, 437; joins husband in Fayette (June 1829), 45, 52, 55n28, 56, 105, 153, 153n12, 417; Joseph Smith proposes marriage to, marries, 401; moves with husband to Manchester, 401; to Ohio, 5, 295, 453; to Fayette (September 1830), 4, 441-42; to Harmony (December 1827), 293, 406; says Joseph did not know Jerusalem was walled, 21n11, 120, 184n9; says Joseph had limited education, 120; sent to retrieve husband from Macedon (NY), 404; visits Manchester (NY) with husband, 443; visits Harmony (PA) with Joseph and Peter Ingersoll, 402; works as husband's scribe, 40, 60-61, 84, 105, 153, 210, 227, 406, 413, 448

Smith, Ephraim, 381

Smith, Frederick, 389

Smith, George A., 420, 438

Smith, Heman C., 219, 223, 244

Smith, Hyrum, 41n2, 175, 197, 198, 258, 312, 425, 428, 438, 439, 441, 454; accompanies Martin Harris to Harmony (PA), 407; appears on Palmyra (NY) road list (1821), 392; appears as witness in Joseph Sr. and Alvin Smith vs. Jeremiah Hurlbut, 388; attends to Enoch Saunders in last illness, 397; baptized by brother Joseph, 3, 293, 363, 363n3, 418; baptizes in Colesville, 369n23, 370n29, 370-71n30, 371n31, 373n41, 444, 446, 453; believes brother Joseph will be rich, 411; birth, 378; borrows seer stone from Willard Chase, 393-94, 396; confrontation with Willard Chase about seer stone, 400, 431; discovers (with Oliver Cowdery) Abner Cole's plan to publish extracts from Book of Mormon, 425-26; founding member of church (one of six elders), according to David Whitmer, 30, 32, 33, 78, 188, 189, 200, 293, 338; handwriting on printer's manuscript of Book of Mormon, 29n6, 47n23, 112n2, 156n23; helps with printing of Book of

Mormon, 422; holds meetings with Newel Knight in Colesville, 444; holds meetings with Knight and baptizes in South Bainbridge, 444; incurs debt to Lemuel Durfee, 402, 403; incurs debts with Gain and Cains Robinson, 395, 408, 413, 413; incurs debt with Levi Daggett, 430, 432; joins Presbyterian Church, becomes lapsed, 396, 411, 429; marries Jerusha Barden, 401; meets Parley Pratt and travels to Fayette (NY), 316, 320, 438, 439; meets Orson Pratt, 449; moves to Colesville (NY) with family, 4, 312n2, 443, 446; ordained a priest (9 June 1830), 349, 352, 432; parents and siblings move into cabin with, 414; preaches in Manchester (NY), 442; receives revelation (through Joseph Smith), 417; receives priest's license, 349; receives letter from Uncle Jesse Smith, 420; from Oliver Cowdery, 420; receives commandment to move to Colesville, 443; sued by Levi Daggett, 433, 434, 438, 441, 443, 446; taxed for land in Manchester, 436; unclaimed letters of, 400; visits Harmony with David Whitmer, 440; visits land agent regarding loss of property, 398-99; visits Colesville with brother Joseph and others, 440-41; visits Fayette with Orson Pratt, 323, 449; visits brother Joseph in Harmony, 417; witness of Book of Mormon (one of eight), 77, 238; works for Jeremiah Hurlbut in Palmyra, 385, 386; works for Lemuel Durfee, 402, 409

Smith, Israel A., 123

Smith, Jerusha (Barden), 366, 401, 432, 438

Smith, Jesse, 378, 382, 420

Smith, Joseph, Jr., 82, 105, 127, 128, 143, 144, 147, 161, 182, 234n2, 241, 268, 278, 282, 313n3, 329n9, 384; "Author and Proprietor" of Book of Mormon, 285; birth, 18, 292; commissions John Whitmer to be first church historian, 233; commissions Whitmer family to keep records, 46, 52; death, 54, 157, 291; description of, 87; designated an elder, 348n3, 349, 350; designated first elder, 353, 356, 357; devil appears to, 309; did not know Jerusalem had walls, 21, 120, 154, 184, 184n9; first tailored suit given to by Christian Whitmer, 87; founder of church, 18, 292, 298, 331; gives seer stone to Oliver Cowdery, 199-200, 207, 214, 430; gives printer's manuscript to Oliver Cowdery, 120; "juggling arts," 13; limited education, 120; obtains copyright to Book of Mormon in Utica (NY), 419; one of original six elders, 30, 32, 33, 78, 188, 189, 200, 293, 338; revision of Bible, 231, 305, 424, 433, 445, 446, 448, 449-50; says some revelations of God, some of the devil, and some of man, 199, 200, 202; seer stone used for translation, 15, 27n5, 329, 332; tells David Whitmer man on road is a Nephite, 30, 33, 44-45, 51-52, 55-56, 187, 189, 191, 192; unable to pronounce Book of Mormon names, 21, 12, 154, 255-56; use of mineral rod, 18; visits cave in hill Cumorah with Oliver Cowdery, 34-35; visits Pontiac (MI), 28; white second seer stone, 200n25

—activities, Vermont and New Hampshire: birth, 379, 380; attends school in Royalton (VT), 381; leg operation in Lebanon (NH), 282

—activities, Palmyra/Manchester (NY), 445, 447; moves to Palmyra with parents (1816/17), 18, 292, 384-85; works for Jeremiah Hurlbut, 386; studies Bible and investigates churches, 387; appears as witness in Joseph Sr. and Alvin Smith vs. Jeremiah Hurlbut, 387-88; first vision, 390; leads money-digging group, 390; shot at, 390; missing from 1820 census, 391; speaks as a Methodist exhorter, 350n18; obtains brown seer stone while digging well on Chase property (1822), 393; moves with family onto Manchester land (1822/23), 393; sees angel (1823), 19, 75, 78, 131, 257, 272, 288, 297, 394; finds plates on Manchester hill, 18, 19, 84, 152, 176, 209, 288, 297,

394-95; attacked by angel, 19-20; instructed by angel to return next year with brother Alvin, 394; returns to hill without Alvin, fails to obtain gold plates (1824), 395-96; attends religious revival, interest in Methodism increased, 396; fails to get gold plates (1825), 397; hired by Josiah Stowell as seer to find Spanish mine in Harmony (PA), 397; returns to Manchester with father, 399; returns to South Bainbridge with father, 399; visits hill and fails to get gold plates (1826), 400; unclaimed letters of, 400, 405; refuses to return seer stone to Willard Chase, 400; with new wife, Emma, moves to parents' home in Manchester (1827), 401; pays debt to Abraham Fish, 401; works for Lemuel Durfee, 402; visits hill and removes gold plates (1827), 292-93, 403; hides gold plates in woods, 404; visits cabinet maker, 404; works for widow in Macedon, 403; brings gold plates home, is attacked and injures thumb, 404; hides gold plates under hearth, 405; in cooper's shop, 405; breaks promise to share profits with others, 103, 107; persecution, 20, 441; works with father on farm, 405; sends mother to ask for Martin Harris's help, 405; moves to Harmony (PA) with Emma (December 1827), 405; returns to inquire about Martin Harris and Book of Mormon manuscript, 410; Lucy Harris brings suit against (in Lyons), 413; returns to negotiate printing of Book of Mormon (June 1829), 3, 418; oversees initial stages of printing (July 1829), 4, 21n9, 273, 421-22, 424; shows eight witnesses the gold plates, 39, 43, 238, 326, 421-22; writes preface to Book of Mormon, 423; returns to confront Abner Cole about printing portions of Book of Mormon, 259n11, 427-28; visits, accompanied by Joseph Knight (March-April 1830), 429; visits, accompanied by wife, Emma (October 1830), 443; meets William W. Phelps, 450

—activities, Harmony (PA), 4; arrives with Josiah Stowell, Joseph Sr., and others and lodges with Isaac Hale (1825), 398; moves to (December 1827), 20, 20n7, 292-93; forms money-digging company, 398; returns with Samuel Lawrence, 400; leaves with Emma Hale while her father, Isaac, attends church, 401; visits, accompanied by wife and Peter Ingersoll and has confrontation with father-in-law, 402; moves to with wife (December 1827), 406; moves onto farm, 406; taxed for property, 407, 412; begins translation of Book of Mormon, wife serves as scribe, 406; transcribes ancient characters from gold plates, 20n7, 102, 107, 112, 115, 131, 154, 177, 186, 213, 249, 250, 407; gives Martin Harris transcribed characters to take to scholars, 407; continues translation with Martin Harris as scribe (April 1828), 3, 20, 20n7; translates with seer stone, 293; allows Harris to take translation manuscript (June 1828), 15, 76-77, 178-79, 257, 327, 408; loses gold plates and urim and thummim, 154, 155, 183, 210, 327, 410; re-obtains gold plates, 183n7, 210, 327, 327n4; briefly attends Methodist class, 409; visited by parents, 410, 411; visited by Martin Harris who requests to see gold plates, 413; Joseph Knight and wife visit, 414; Oliver Cowdery and Samuel Smith arrive (April 1829), 9, 74, 414; enters into agreement with Isaac Hale for property, 414; begins to dictate Book of Mormon to Oliver Cowdery, 414; makes payments on land, 415, 431, 434, 438-39; discerns Oliver Cowdery's private thoughts, 9, 44, 51, 103, 107, 415; baptized by Cowdery, 137n10, 329, 363, 415-16; ordained

(with Cowdery) by John the Baptist, 329, 329n9, 415; Joseph Knight brings supplies, 417; Hyrum visits, 417; persecution, 3, 4, 54; follows David Whitmer's movements (with seer stone?), 21-22, 44, 51, 54-55, 104, 107, 169, 187, 189, 190; meets David Whitmer (June 1829), 20, 44; leaves with Cowdery and Whitmer (June 1829), 9, 10, 44-45, 417; returns to (October 1829), 21n9, 424; writes to Cowdery, 425; receives letter from Cowdery, 526; land assessed, 426, 449; returns to (June 1830), 433; copies and arranges revelations with help from John Whitmer, 306n4, 437; receives letter from Cowdery demanding change in revelation, 437; enumeration in 1830 census, 437; incurs debt with George Noble, 438; writes (with John Whitmer) to Colesville Saints explaining delay in visiting, 439; visited by Newel Knight and wife, 439-40; returns to visit, accompanied by Sidney Rigdon, 452

—activities, South Bainbridge (NY): arrives with father and Josiah Stowell (1825), 398; returns to with father, 399; attends school, 399; is arrested and tried (1826), 399-400; flees and is re-arrested, 400; marries Emma Hale (1827), 401; buys horse from Josiah Stowell, 424, 435; is arrested and tried (1830), 435-36

—activities, Colesville (NY): works for Joseph Knight in (1827-27), 401; visits Joseph Knight to ask for money, 412; performs exorcism on Newel Knight, 431, 436; arrives with others for baptismal meeting, 434; is arrested and tried (1830), 435-36; escapes and flees to Harmony (PA), 436; receives (with Oliver Cowdery) ordination by Peter, James, and John, 436-37; confirms members of church, 369n23, 440-41; visits, accompanied by Sidney Rigdon, 237-38, 237n12, 305, 452

—activities, Fayette, 262, 281, 272-73, 296-97 298, 337, 338, 338n10, 432, 445; possible early contact and money digging in, 287-88, 297, 298, 331; transported to (with Oliver Cowdery) by David Whitmer (June 1829), 3, 9, 10, 21-22, 21n9, 31n13, 51-52, 55-56, 75-76, 103-104, 136-37, 152n7, 153, 160, 166, 187, 192, 212, 261, 262, 417; says man on road is angel transporting plates to Cumorah, 30-31, 44-45, 51-52, 55-56, 160, 187, 189, 191, 192; translates Book of Mormon (June 1829), 3, 59, 212, 288, 293, 331-32, 417, 419; baptizes converts, 9, 200, 293, 298, 336, 337, 365-66n11, 418; commanded to ordain Oliver Cowdery an elder, 136, 136n7, 137, 337, 419; present when three witnesses see angel and gold plates, 29, 32, 34, 39, 50-51, 77, 100, 115-16, 121, 134, 146, 155-56, 160, 163, 176-77, 187, 212-13, 325, 345; completes translation of Book of Mormon, 3, 9, 21, 21n9, 273, 293, 421; attends conference (June 1830), 349, 350; appointed leader of conference, 350-51; transported to by Newel Knight and moves in with Whitmers (September 1830), 4, 21n9, 295, 368n19, 441-42; denounces Hiram Page's revelations, 255, 442; attends conference (September 1830), 350-51; visited by Peter Bauder, 445; meets Orson Pratt, 322-23, 445-46; ordains Orson Pratt an elder, 323, 448; sends Orson Pratt on mission to Colesville with letter of introduction, 449; meets Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge (December 1830), 235, 312n2, 359, 449; receives revelation to visit branches of church with Sidney Rigdon, 236-37; attends conference (January 1831), 237; preaches in, 284, 299, 350; preaches

in nearby Waterloo, 312; receives letter from John Whitmer, 453; confirms Almira Mack as member of church, 368n19; moves to Ohio from (January 1831), 5, 295, 453

—activities, Ohio: moves to (January 1831), 5, 324, 453; writes to Martin Harris, 454; efforts to publish revelations, 334, 340

—revelations, 3, 4, 23, 32, 76, 172, 197, 201, 205, 206, 207, 231, 233, 240, 255, 305, 305n1, 306n5, 345, 437, 445; calling of twelve apostles, 419; dispute about biblical apostle John, 415; for Joseph Knight, 417; Joseph Smith Sr., 413; Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge, 236, 449; Orson Pratt, 323, 323n3, 446; Martin Harris, 413; Hyrum Smith, 417; Ezra Thayre and Northrup Sweet, 445; regarding compilation of hymnal, 437; Hiram Page's revelations, 442; James Covill, 372n37, 451; Lamanite mission, 351, 443, 444; lost manuscript, 417; Oliver Cowdery's desire to translate, 415; Oliver Cowdery's private thoughts, 415; ordination of elders, 419; re-baptism, 430-31; relocation to Colesville (Hyrum Smith) and Waterloo (parents), 443; relocation to Ohio, 237, 305, 306, 306n6, 351, 351n29, 451; sale of Book of Mormon copyright in Canada, 180, 197-99, 199n18, 258-59, 259n11, 328, 328n8, 329, 333-34, 340-41, 428; sale of Martin Harris farm, 333n2, 429-30; three witnesses, 345, 421; transportation of recorded revelations to Missouri by John Whitmer, 238; trip to Colesville with Sidney Rigdon, 450; use of wine, 439; designation (of Joseph Smith, Jr.) to receive for church, 351; prophecy of Enoch, 236, 449-50; publication resisted by David Whitmer, 9, 15-16, 206, 334, 334n8

Smith, Joseph, Sr., 258, 259n11, 431; one of eight witnesses, 77, 238; suffers from "nervous affection," 420

—activities, Massachusetts/Vermont/New Hampshire: birth (MA), 377; baptized as infant, 377; marriage, 377; lives in Tunbridge (VT), 378; helps found Universalist Society in Tunbridge, 378; possibly joins Anabaptist Society in Tunbridge, 378; moves to Randolph (VT) and opens merchandising business, 378-79; financially ruined by investment swindle, 379; returns to Tunbridge, 379; moves to Royalton (VT), 379; witnesses land transactions in Sharon (VT), 380; moves to Sharon, 379; teaches school, 380; witness in counterfeiting scheme, 380; returns to Tunbridge, 380; witness to land transaction in Tunbridge, 380; returns to Royalton, 380-81; engages in merchandising, 381; taxed in Royalton, 381; first dream/vision, 381; moves to Lebanon (NH), 382; taxed in Lebanon, 382-83; second dream/vision, 382-83; moves to Norwich (VT), 383; experiences crop failures three consecutive years, 383-84; third dream/vision, 383-84; is warned out in Norwich, 383

—activities, New York: moves to Palmyra (1816), 18n1, 384, 424; locates family at west end of Main Street, 385, 388; appears on Palmyra road lists (1817-22), 385, 388, 390, 392, 393; forms partnership (with son Alvin) with Jeremiah Hurlbut, 385; sixth dream/vision, 385; incurs debt with Hurlbut, 385, 386; partnership dissolves, 386-87, 387n6; sues Hurlbut and wins judgement, 387-88; moves family south to Samuel Jennings's property, 285n22, 389, 390; complaint issued against by Hurlbut, 389; sued by Hurlbut, 389; seventh dream/vision, 389-90; contracts (along with son Alvin) for Manchester land (1820/21), 18n1, 391; ap-

pears in property assessments for Manchester (1821-29), 392, 393; owes Jennings, 392; unable to make last payment on property, 393, 394; completes cabin and moves family onto Manchester property (1822/23), 393; begins constructing frame house (November 1823), 395; incurs debts with Gain and Cains Robinson, 395, 397, 402, 403, 407, 410, 411, 412; pays debts to Robinsons, 408, 410, 413; exhumes Alvin's body with help from neighbors, 396; sued by Russell Stoddard, who wins judgement (1825), 396-97; attends to Enoch Saunders in last illness, 397; accompanies (with son Joseph Jr.) Josiah Stowell to South Bainbridge, 398; arrives with others in Harmony (PA) and lodges with Isaac Hale (1825), 398; helps form money-digging company, 398; frame house completed in absence of, 398; Russell Stoddard obtains deed to Smith property in absence of, 398; returns to Manchester, 399; loses land to Lemuel Durfee and becomes renter, 399, 401; returns with son Joseph Jr. to South Bainbridge, 399; incurs debt to Lemuel Durfee, 402, 408, 409, 413, 418-19, 424; works for Durfee, 402, 409, 410-11; sent to spy on neighbors, 404; visits Martin Harris to ask for money, 407; visits (with wife, Lucy) son Joseph Jr. in Harmony, 410, 411; visits (with son Samuel Smith) Joseph Knight in Colesville (NY), 412; sent to bring Joseph Jr. back to Palmyra over Abner Cole's copyright infringement, 426, 427-28; signs agreement to divide revenue from Book of Mormon sales with Martin Harris, 427, 428; pays debt to Michael Eggleston, 427; sued (with Abraham Fish) by Lemuel Durfee, Jr., 427, 432; baptism, 352, 364, 364n6, 430; attends church conference (June 1830), 350, 352; ordained a priest (9 June 1830), 349, 352, 432; receives priest's license, 5, 350, 352-53; enumeration in 1830 Manchester census, 437-38; visits relatives in St. Lawrence County (NY), 438; receives commandment to move to Waterloo, 443; arrested and imprisoned (November 1830), 312n2, 446-47, 450; speaks with Eli Bruce, 447; released from prison, 449; baptizes two in Canandaigua, 371n32; joins Lucy in Fayette/Waterloo, 450

Smith, Joseph, III, 61, 119, 125, 127, 130, 172, 199n19, 249; interviews David Whitmer, 123-24, 221-22; receives letter from David Whitmer, 219; receives letter from William McLellin, 327-30, 335n11

Smith, Joseph F., 79, 147; denies offering David Whitmer money for Book of Mormon manuscript, 46n20; interviews Whitmer, 41-57, 48n24, 87, 104n14, 129, 142n8, 149, 175, 220, 345

Smith, Katharine. *See* Salisbury, Katharine (Smith)

Smith, Lovina (Hyrum's daughter), 403, 439

Smith, Lucy (Mack), 5, 32n19, 137n10, 183, 248n3, 259n11, 311, 311n2, 345-46, 368n19, 371n32, 372nn38-39, 378, 382, 383, 384, 385, 392, 393, 399, 403, 404, 406, 407, 408, 409, 413, 416, 422, 428, 438, 443, 444, 446, 449, 450, 453

—activities, Vermont/New Hampshire, 387; birth (NH), 377; marriage, 377; lives in Tunbridge (VT), 378; gives birth to unnamed child that dies, gives birth to Alvin, Hyrum, 378; moves to Randolph (VT), 378; sick with "consumption," 379; moves back to Tunbridge, 379; gives birth to Sophronia, 379; visited by Jason Mack, 379; moves to Royalton (VT), 379; moves to Sharon (VT), 379; gives birth to Joseph Jr., 380; returns to Tunbridge, 380; returns to Royalton, 380-81; gives birth to Ephraim

and William, 381; moves to Lebanon (NH), 382; gives birth to Katharine, 382; moves to Norwich (VT), 383; gives birth to Don Carlos, 384; takes mother to Royalton on way to Palmyra, 387

—activities, New York: arrives in Palmyra with children (1816/17), 292n2, 384-85; moves to Samuel Jennings's property, 389, 390; gives birth to Lucy, 392; moves with family onto Manchester land (1822/23), 393; joins Presbyterian Church (1824/25), 396; sends Joseph Jr. to cabinet maker, 404; sent by Joseph Jr. to ask for Martin Harris's help, 405; visits Martin Harris to ask for money, 407; visits Harmony (PA) with Joseph Sr., 410, 411; inactive in Presbyterian church, 411, 429; in Fayette when three witnesses see angel and gold plates, 421; visited by three men trying to destroy Book of Mormon manuscript, 425; visited by Presbyterian committee, 425; baptism, 364, 364n6, 430; home invaded by creditors, 447; moves to the Kingdom (near Waterloo), 296, 296n1, 448; writes to brother Solomon Mack, 451; leads group to Ohio, 455

Smith, Lucy (daughter of Joseph Sr. and Lucy Smith), 374, 374n49, 383, 392, 393, 448

Smith, Mary (Hyrum's daughter), 420, 438

Smith, Mary (Duty), 377

Smith, Mary (Fielding), 41n2

Smith, Nathan, 382

Smith, Samuel (brother of Joseph Smith, Sr.), 431

Smith, Samuel H., 411, 447; acts as scribe for Joseph Jr., 413; attends church conference (September 1830), 351; baptism, 363, 416; birth, 380; founding member of church (one of six elders), according to David Whitmer, 293, 338; incurs debt with Lemuel Durfee, 408, 409; joins Orson Pratt and Joseph Coe in preparing church to move to Ohio, 323, 372n36; joins Presbyterian Church, becomes inactive, 396; 411, 429; missing from 1820 census, 391; missions to Livonia (NY), 435, 438, 444; moves mother and sister to Waterloo (NY), 448; ordained an elder, 201n28, 349, 351, 432; receives elder's license, 350; travels with Orson Pratt to Ohio, 324; unclaimed letter, 405; visits (with father) Joseph Knight in Colesville, 412; visits father in prison, 447; visits (with Oliver Cowdery) Joseph Jr. in Harmony, 3, 75n8; witness to the Book of Mormon (one of eight), 77, 238; witness to land transaction between Isaac Hale and Joseph Smith, 414; works for Lemuel Durfee, 399, 402, 409, 410-11

Smith, Sophronia. *See* Stoddard, Sophronia (Smith)

Smith, Spencer, 244

Smith, Thomas W., 25-27, 58, 123, 125, 128

Smith, William, 312, 367n14, 393, 433, 438, 447; baptized by David Whitmer, 366, 366n12, 432; birth, 381; handles gold plates, 404; moves with family to Palmyra (NY), 385; works for Lemuel Durfee, 410-11

Smith family, affected by typhoid fever in Lebanon (NH), 282; enumerated in 1810 Royalton (VT) census, 381; enumerated in 1820 Manchester (NY) census, 391; home invaded by creditors, 447; money diggers, 285n22; move from frame house into cabin (with Hyrum's family), 414; renters on own land, 399, 401

Snow, Lorenzo, 111

Snyder, John J., 172, 193, 193n1, 227

Solomon, Charles F., 226n1

South Bainbridge, Chenango County (NY), 424; baptisms, 370-71, 444; Joseph Smith arrested and tried in (1830), 435-36; Joseph Smith attends school, 399; Joseph Smith and father accompany Josiah Stowell to, 398; Joseph Smith lives with

Josiah Stowell for five months, 398; Joseph Smith tried in (1826), 398, 399-400; Joseph and Emma Smith married, 401

South Cottonwood (UT), 165

South West (MO), 95

Spaulding, Solomon, 24n19, 67n8, 86, 94, 128, 132, 153n13, 156, 195-96

Spear, Abraham, 387, 387n6, 388

Springfield (ID), 165

Springfield (MO), 182

St. George (UT), 217

St. Joseph (MO), 242

St. Lawrence County (NY), 372n34, 420, 431, 446

St. Louis (MO), 95

St. Louis Republican, 125-32

Stacy, John, 374, 374n50

Stacy, Mrs., 374

Stafford, Christopher M., 374n51

Stafford, John, 364n6

Stafford Road, 389, 390, 392

State Historical Society of Missouri, 182

Stevenson, Edward, 12n2, 19n3, 421; hears three witnesses testify to Book of Mormon, 346; interviews David Whitmer (1877), 28-35; (1886), 159-64; (1888), 251; interviews John C. Whitmer, 226, 261-63; writes to John Taylor, 33

Stevenson, Emily E. (Williams), 186, 186n1

Stewartsville (MO), 128

Stockholm, St. Lawrence County (NY), 438

Stoddard, Calvin, 272n39, 372, 407, 429, 443, 453

Stoddard, Eunice, 429

Stoddard, James S., 428

Stoddard, Russell, 397, 398

Stoddard, Sophronia (Smith), 372n39, 378, 429, 443, 453; birth of, 379; joins Presbyterian Church (1824/25), 396; marries, 407

Stout, Hosea, 348

Stowell, Josiah, Jr., 399

Stowell, Josiah, Sr., baptism, 374, 374n52, 428; handles gold plates, 404; hires Joseph Smith as seer to find lost Spanish mine (1825), 397-98; houses Joseph Smith for five months, 398; plans to buy $500 worth of Books of Mormon, 425; sells horse to Joseph Smith, 424, 435; testifies at Joseph Smith's trial (1826), 400; testifies at Smith's trials (1830), 435, 436; travels to Canada to sell Book of Mormon copyright, 258; visiting Smith family when Joseph Jr. obtains gold plates, 403, 404; visits Palmyra/Manchester (January 1830), 428

Strang, James J., 66, 66n7, 234

Stringham, Esther (Knight), 367, 434

Stringham, Julia Ann, 367, 434

Stringham, Sylvester, 290, 290n17

Stringham, William, 367, 434

Stuart, Charles, 289n12

Susquehanna River, 137n10, 400, 416

Swedenborg, Emanuel, 272, 272n6

Sweet, Northrup, 370, 370n27, 445

Sweet, Richard, 428

Switzerland, 9n1

sword of Laban, 29, 32, 35, 38, 43, 48, 51, 77, 91, 113, 116, 121, 160, 162, 170, 177, 187, 213, 220

Syracuse (NY), 285

Tacoma (WA), 135

Tales of a Grandfather, 290, 290n22

Tambora (Sumbawa Island, East Indies), 384

Tanner, Lyman Greenwell, 170n14

Tanner, Nathan, Jr., 10, 150, 153n13, 165-70

Tanner, Nathan, Sr., 165

Tanner, Nathan Amasa, 165, 167, 168

Tanner, Rachel (Smith), 165

Tarbell, Squire, 401

Taylor, John, 33, 49, 111

teacher(s), 141, 201, 206, 255, 350, 355-56
Teraphim, 59n3
Testimony of Eight Witnesses, 66n5, 244, 248n3, 250, 278, 282, 419
Testimony of Three Witnesses, 10, 13, 22n15, 39, 65-66, 66n5, 97, 110, 118, 132, 142, 147, 193, 200, 224, 227, 238, 243, 244, 278, 282, 320, 325, 345-47, 419; copy made by Oliver Cowdery, 48n24, 53, 345; signed by each man, 47, 53, 142n8, 345; signed by Oliver Cowdery for each man, 141, 141-42n8
Thayre, Ezra, 370, 370n27, 442, 444, 445
Thayre, Joel, 401
Thayre, Levi, 401
Thomas Creek, 284, 284n18, 294, 294n14, 332
three Nephites, 45, 189, 191
three witnesses, 29, 33, 34, 41, 49, 95, 148, 153, 200, 210, 212, 222, 268, 268n2, 295, 304n4, 320; alleged denial of testimonies denounced, 25, 109-10; did not touch plates, 135; testimony of, 5, 13, 22n15, 39, 65-66, 325, 345-47; vision of, 3, 9, 25-26, 39, 109-10, 143, 155-56, 191, 193, 238, 308-309, 325-26, 345-47
Tice, Solomon, 388
Tiffin (OH), 174n5
Times and Seasons, 312
tongues (speaking in), 202
Topsfield (MA), 377
Toronto (Ontario, Canada), 198, 199, 199n18, 259n11
Torslev parish (Denmark), 261n1
Traughber, J. L., 26, 328n8; comments on Joseph Smith's Canadian revelation, 259n11, 340-41; disputes Thomas W. Smith's version of interview with David Whitmer, 25; interviews David Whitmer, 15, 58-61, 226-27; writes to James Cobb, 333-35
Trigg, George W., 71
Tucker, Pomeroy, 374n51, 384, 390, 418, 451
Tunbridge (VT), 377, 378, 379, 380, 387
Tunbridge Gore (VT), 378
Turley, Theodore, 240-41
Turner, Orsamus, 350n18
Tyler (TX), 333

Universalist(s), 378
University of Michigan, 139, 144, 145, 148
urim and thummim, 21n12, 59n3, 60, 155, 178; confused with seer stone, 21n10, 59, 60-61, 82, 85; description, 15, 20, 40, 131; first mentioned by William W. Phelps in 1833, 59n3; never seen being worn, 154n15; not mentioned in Joseph Smith's early revelations, 60, 60n5; Oliver Cowdery's use of term in 1834, 59n4; referred to as "Interpreters," 43, 59n3, 59n4, 61, 121, 135, 138, 187, 188, 327, 329; referred to as "spectacles," 15, 21, 40, 59n3, 136, 152, 153, 154, 154n15, 178, 183, 184, 184n8, 200n25, 210, 272, 273; revelation (command to baptize) received through, 137n10; said to have been used by Jaredites, 21; said to have been used in translation of Book of Mormon, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 26, 27, 27n5, 40, 58, 59, 131, 169, 184, 213-14, 293, 329; in translating first part of Book of Mormon, thereafter a seer stone, 15, 27n5, 30, 82, 138, 155, 179, 188, 210, 214; seen by David Whitmer (and other witnesses) in vision, 29, 32, 38, 43, 48, 113, 116, 121, 135-36, 163, 170, 177, 187, 213, 220, 346; taken from Joseph Smith after Martin Harris lost manuscript, 410. *See also* seer stone
Utah, 23, 23n17, 29, 42, 49, 50, 87, 125, 135, 140, 141, 148, 156, 165, 175, 215, 242
Utica (NY), 407, 419

Van Cleave, James R. B., 42-43, 43n9, 45, 48, 50, 53, 158, 323n3
Van Cott, Lovina, 317, 318
Vermont, 255, 384, 387

Virgen City (UT), 217
Virginia, 22n16, 42n8

Walker, Charles Lowell, 217
Walle (Germany), 270
Warner, W. W., 43, 43n10, 50, 341
Wasson, Benjamin, 436
Wasson, Elizabeth (Hale), 401, 436
Wasson, George I., 70
Waterloo, Seneca County (NY), 22, 73, 130, 268n1, 272, 283, 285, 289, 296, 299, 299n8, 312, 312n2, 331, 331n1, 337, 337n5, 413, 445, 449, 451, 455; baptisms, 373, 373n44; Joseph Smith, Sr., arrives in, 450; Mormon exodus from, 5; Sidney Rigdon leaves for Ohio from, 453; Smith family moves to, 4, 443. *See also* Kingdom, Seneca County (NY)
Watertown, Jefferson County (NY), 30n12
Watkins Glen (NY), 151, 209
Wayne Sentinel, 285n22, 420, 429, 456
Webb, Henry, 119n2
Weed, Thurlow, 418
Welch, Ernest L., 298-99
Wells, Daniel H., 161, 161n6
Wells, Ira J., 454
Wells, Mrs., 403
West Fayette, Seneca County (NY), 282, 283, 284
Whitmer, Anne (Schott), 4, 283-84n17, 365, 430
Whitmer, Christian, 29, 33, 151, 201, 282n8; attends German Reformed Church, 282; attends church conference (June 1830), 350; baptized by Oliver Cowdery, 4, 293, 365, 430; constable in Fayette (NY), 183n4; founding member of church (one of six elders), according to David Whitmer, 30, 32, 33; gives Joseph Smith first tailored suit, 87; marriage, 283n17; priesthood licence, 5; prophecies of, 199; receives teacher's license, 350, 355-56; witness of Book of Mormon (one of eight), 77, 238; writes (as scribe) for Joseph Smith, 84, 105, 106, 112, 115, 153, 210, 417
Whitmer, D. P., 70
Whitmer, David, 5, 33, 151, 231, 260, 263, 263n9, 277, 283, 295, 327, 422, 430, 439; affirms testimony of Book of Mormon, 216-27; appointed to keep church records, 351; bears testimony in Pontiac (MI) (1834), 28; believes Bible and Book of Mormon harmonious, 23; biographical data, 9-12, 22, 42, 49, 73-74, 130, 157, 180, 209, 211; comments on Joseph Smith's character, 90-91; denies having refuted original testimony of Book of Mormon, 68, 90, 105, 108, 195; description, 22, 29, 34, 49, 73, 90, 112, 114, 142, 146, 182; finds gold plates lying on ground, 13; founding member of church (one of six elders), 30, 32, 33, 79, 188, 189, 200, 293, 338; German ancestry, 9n1, 114, 282; gold plates described, 13, 58; description of gold plates differs from Martin Harris's, 14; mistakenly believes church organized at Fayette, 22n14, 29-30, 30n11, 32, 78, 79n27, 93-94, 94n1, 187-88, 189, 201, 201n29, 227; mistakenly believes he possesses original dictated manuscript of Book of Mormon, 19n3, 47-48, 48n24, 53, 112, 117-18, 142n8; mistakenly names six founding members (elders) of church, 29-30, 31-32, 78-79, 79n27, 200-201n28; possesses early church documents (printer's manuscript of Book of Mormon), 19, 23, 29, 32, 33, 34, 46, 79, 83, 102, 106, 112, 115, 119-20, 141-42, 147, 159, 164, 166-67, 175, 177, 186, 196, 210, 213, 217, 220, 234; possesses transcription of ancient characters inscribed on gold plates, 98, 102, 107, 112-13, 115, 131, 157, 159, 159n3, 164, 167, 173, 177, 186, 188, 196, 213; prophecies of, 199; refers to ancient American ruins as evidence for Book of Mormon, 23, 96, 98; says Joseph Smith first translated with urim and thummim, thereafter with seer stone, 15, 27n5, 30,

82, 138, 155, 179, 188, 210, 214; tells of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery visiting cave in hill Cumorah, 34-35; translation of gold plates described, 15-16, 21, 26, 61, 76, 86, 104-105, 108, 122, 154, 169, 178, 183-84, 196-97, 214, 273n17, 329; vision (of 1829) described in metaphysical terms, 9-10, 63, 66, 68, 140, 141, 146-47, 149, 166, 170, 177, 193, 213, 325-26n2, 347; witness to Book of Mormon (one of three), 65, 68, 69, 73, 83, 111, 114, 121, 140, 142, 144, 160, 162, 164, 171, 174, 190, 195, 209, 218, 220, 238, 243, 248, 295, 325, 345-47

—activities, New York, 152, 262, 289, 304n2, 433, 442, 445; moves with family to Fayette (1809), 9, 22, 73, 73n1; meets Cowdery in Palmyra and learns about gold plates (1828), 3, 9, 20, 74, 103, 176n13, 414; sees place where plates were deposited, 19, 39-40, 130-31, 131n17, 153; visited by Cowdery in Fayette (April 1829), 21, 44, 51, 75, 414; corresponds with Cowdery, 3, 9, 44, 51, 54, 75, 81, 103, 152n7, 176, 187, 189, 212, 414-15, 416; miraculous plowing (planting) of field, 44, 51, 56, 169; Smith follows movements of, (with seer stone?), 21-22, 44, 51, 54-55, 104, 107, 169, 187, 189, 190; arrives in Harmony and meets Smith (June 1829), 20, 44, 81, 130, 417; transports Smith and Cowdery to Fayette (June 1829), 3, 9, 10, 21-22, 31n13, 44, 55-56, 75-76, 103-104, 136-37, 152n7, 153, 160, 166, 187, 192, 212, 262, 417; sees Nephite on road, 10, 30-31, 33, 44-45, 48, 51-52, 55-56, 160, 187, 189, 191, 192; receives impression of angel under shed, 11, 31, 160, 192; Smith receives revelation for, 417; receives sign Smith true prophet, 66; witness to translation, 84, 86, 130, 182; may have served as scribe to Smith, 227, 293; mentions Smith's use of blanket during translation, 153, 153n13, 154n15, 169; says Smith could not translate unless humble, 91, 121, 173, 178, 197; baptism of by Smith, 3, 4, 9, 137, 137n8, 187, 189, 190, 200, 200n26, 231, 293, 363, 363n3, 365n10, 418; ordained elder, 23, 137, 137n8, 187, 189, 190, 200, 349, 350, 418, 419; revelations to regarding calling of twelve apostles, 419; sees apparition while plowing, 11, 29, 34, 160, 162, 164, 187, 189, 191, 221, 325-26n2; vision of angel and gold plates (June 1829), 3, 9, 13, 25-26, 29, 32, 32n19, 33, 38, 43-44, 48, 50-51, 58, 63, 77, 85, 91-92, 96, 98, 99, 113, 115-16, 121, 122, 132, 134, 135-36, 141, 143, 144, 146-47, 155-56, 160, 162, 163, 164, 166, 169-70, 172, 176-77, 187, 189, 190, 197, 212-13, 217-18, 220, 272, 421; sees table with brass plates, director, sword of Laban, and urim and thummim, 29, 32, 38, 43, 48, 50, 77, 91, 113, 116, 121, 160, 162, 163, 170, 177, 187, 220; hears voice of God, 44, 92, 143, 213, 220, 222; did not handle plates, 94n2, 135, 141, 143n9, 166; denies vision was hallucination, 124, 143, 144; in Palmyra during printing of Book of Mormon, 130, 421; baptizes Newel Knight, 432; attends conference (June 1830), 349; baptizes eleven, 4, 366n12, 432; receives elder's license, 349; visits Colesville with Smith, 434; baptizes Almira Mack, 368n19; and Thomas Marsh, 368n20, 439; visits Harmony with Hyrum Smith, 440; visits Colesville with Joseph Jr. and others, 440-41; marries Julia Ann Jolly (1831), 11, 23, 74, 211, 283, 283n15, 452; attends conference (26 September 1830), 350, 351; visits hill Cumorah three times, 24; moves to Ohio, 11

—activities, Missouri: president of church in Missouri (1834), 11; affirms testimony before Missouri mob, 216, 223; ordained as Joseph Smith's

successor, 11, 234; excommunicated (1838), 11, 141; lives in Richmond (MO) (1838-88), 11, 17, 22, 23, 26; heads splinter group, 11; home damaged in cyclone, 41, 79, 96, 98-99, 111, 114, 126, 147; receives charge from Cowdery to keep records, 46; alleges Mormons offered money for Book of Mormon manuscript, 46n20, 79, 87, 120, 129, 157, 175-76; refuses to sell manuscript, 147, 157, 176, 210, 215, 220; receives revelation in 1838 commanding him to separate from church, 194; dying testimony, 214-15, 225-27; death, 11, 211, 215

—points of conflict with Joseph Smith and LDS Church, 132, 194; changes in revelations, 205-206; claim of angelic ordinations, 43, 50, 136, 136n6, 137, 161, 161n5, 189, 227, 329n9, 416; hierarchical control, 9; high priesthood, 69, 141, 180, 203-204, 206; Joseph Smith's demand for primacy, 9; Joseph Smith as "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator," 202, 203, 204-205, 227, 328; new name of church, 140, 140n3, 208; polygamy, 23, 23n17, 69, 131-32, 202, 209, 215; publication of revelations and legalistic view of, 9, 15-16, 206, 334, 334n8, 340-41; revelation regarding Book of Mormon copyright in Canada, 180, 197-99, 199n18, 259n11, 340-41, 428; Sidney Rigdon's influence over Joseph Smith, 5, 141, 145, 147, 180, 203-204, 207, 208; various revelations thought to be false, 18, 172, 180, 194, 197, 199, 204, 205, 207-208

—writings: *Address to All Believers in Christ*, 68, 194-208, 215; "Proclamation," 10, 62, 68-71

—letters to: E. C. Brand, 224; E. L. Kelley, 117-18; Heman C. Smith, 219; James N. Seymour, 219; Joseph Smith III, 219; *Kansas City Journal*, 81-82; Mark H. Forscutt, 219; Robert Nelson, 225; S. T. Mouch, 222; *Saints' Herald*, 172-74; *Salt Lake Herald*, 17; Sister Gates, 224-25

—interviews conducted by: Jesse R. Badham, 220-21; Davis H. Bays, 218; E. C. Briggs and R. Etzenhouser, 119-22; James Caffall, 218-19; Angus M. Cannon, 225; David H. Cannon, 217-18; George Q. Cannon, 111-16; J. W. Chatburn, 93-94; *Chicago Times* (1875), 17-24, 25-26; (1881), 83-88; *Chicago Tribune* (1885), 150-58; (1888), 209-10; E. S. Gilbert, 65-67; Zenas H. Gurley, 135-38; James H. Hart, 95-110; M. J. Hubble, 182-92; *Kansas City Journal*, 72-80; William H. Kelley and George A. Blakeslee, 89-92; William E. McLellin, 220; Frank McDowell, 223; Thomas B. Marsh, 217; Anthony Metcalf, 193; Henry Moon, 218; John Morgan and Matthias F. Cowley, 221-22; James Henry Moyle, 10, 12n2, 139-49; Eri B. Mullin, 15-16; John Murphy, 62-64; *Omaha Herald*, 171-81; Moroni Pratt, S. R. Marks, and others, 222-23; Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, 41-57, 87, 220; P. Wilhelm Poulson, 36-40; Franklin D. Richards and Charles C. Richards, 224; *Richmond Democrat*, 211-15; B. H. Roberts, 223-24; *St. Louis Republican*, 125-32; Heman C. Smith and William H. Kelley, 223; Joseph Smith III and others, 123-24, 221; Thomas W. Smith, 25-27; Edward Stevenson (1877), 28-35; (1886), 159-64; Nathan Tanner, 165-70; J. L. Traughber, 58-61, 340-41; unknown reporter, 133-34; Edwin G. Woolley, 221;

Whitmer, David C. (Jacob Whitmer's son), 46, 47, 52

Whitmer, David J. (David Whitmer's son), 42, 42n5, 49, 52, 74, 79, 89, 96, 97, 98, 111, 114, 116, 126, 141, 150, 157, 161n5, 165, 167, 180, 234, 341

Whitmer, Elizabeth Ann. *See* Cowdery, Elizabeth Ann (Whitmer)

Whitmer, Elizabeth (Schott), 284n17, 365, 430

Whitmer, Jacob, 42, 46, 47, 50, 52, 53, 130, 151, 180, 198, 217, 251, 261, 282n8, 283; attends German Reformed Church, 282; baptized by Oliver Cowdery, 293, 365, 430; death of, 38, 157; home damaged in tornado, 41; marriage, 284n17; one of eight witnesses, 37, 77, 116, 238

Whitmer, John, 5, 62, 90, 151, 198, 217, 263, 283, 289, 421, 433, 437, 439, 451, 452; biographical data, 231-32; founding member of church (one of six elders), according to David Whitmer, 30, 32, 33, 79, 188, 189; one of eight witnesses, 38, 63, 77, 175, 231, 238, 243, 247, 248, 249; possesses copy of Book of Mormon characters, 249, 250, 251; prophecies of, 199

—activities, New York and Pennsylvania, 437, 439, 450; attends German Reformed Church, 282; works as Joseph Smith's scribe, 40, 60, 227, 231, 293, 323n3, 417, 446, 448, 450; describes translation of Book of Mormon, 329; receives revelation (through Joseph Smith), 417; baptism, 3, 231, 293, 293n10, 365, 365n10, 417; ordained an elder, 231, 349, 350, 357; apostle, 306, 357; describes seeing gold plates in metaphysical terms, 232, 240-41; says he handled the gold plates, 245-46, 248, 251; describes gold plates, 248; attends church conference (June 1830), 349, 357; receives elder's license, 5, 349, 357-58; preaches in Fayette, 288; attends church conference (September 1830), 350; copies and arranges revelations for Joseph Smith, 306n4, 437; writes letter (with Joseph Smith) to Colesville Saints, 439, 449; visits Colesville with Joseph Smith, 434, 440; commanded to transport revelations to Missouri, 231, 238, 305, 306; receives letter of introduction from Sidney Rigdon, 451

—activities, Ohio and Missouri: arrives in Ohio, 238n13, 305-307, 452; presiding elder in Ohio, 305; writes to Joseph Smith from Ohio, 453; marriage, 231; appointed first church historian, 231, 233; writes history of church, 156-57, 175, 189, 233-38; editor of *Messenger and Advocate*, 231, 239; refuses to hand over records to church leaders, 233; death, 157, 251, 255; excommunication (1838), 175, 231, 241n2

—interviews: conducted by Myron H. Bond, 251; William Lewis and others, 250-51; P. Wilhelm Poulson, 36, 37, 247-49; Theodore Turley, 240-41; letter to Heman C. Smith, 244; reaffirms testimony of Book of Mormon, 239, 241, 242, 244, 245-46, 250-51

Whitmer, John C., 5, 42, 42n7, 43, 49, 50, 90, 116, 157, 175, 180, 226, 251, 341; interviewed by Andrew Jenson and Edward Stevenson, 261-63

Whitmer, Julia Ann (Jolly), baptized by David Whitmer, 366, 432; marries David Whitmer, 11, 74, 211, 283, 283n15, 452

Whitmer, Mary, 42n7

Whitmer, Mary (Musselman), 289n12; baptized by Oliver Cowdery, 4, 293, 365, 431; German heritage, 9n1; sees angel with gold plates, 31, 45, 48, 52, 56, 160-61, 187, 189, 191-92, 261-63

Whitmer, Peter, Jr., 283; attends church conference (9 June 1830), 349; attends conference (26 September 1830), 350, 351; baptized by Oliver Cowdery, 3, 231, 293n10, 363, 363n3, 365n10, 418; becomes an elder, 349; founding member of church (one of six elders), according to David Whitmer, 78, 188, 189, 200, 293, 338; helps with printing of Book of Mormon, 421, 424; mission to Indians in Ohio and Missouri, 79, 82, 234, 351, 445; one of eight witnesses,

77, 238; prophecies of, 199; receives elder's license, 350; receives revelation (through Joseph Smith), 417

Whitmer, Peter, Sr., 9, 191, 231, 255, 261, 262, 273, 282n8, 283, 288, 296n1, 373n48; appearance in 1810 census, 73n1; baptized by Oliver Cowdery, 4, 293, 365, 431; description, 282; Fayette home, center of Mormon activities, 3, 4, 9, 21, 32n19, 136, 176n13, 177, 187-88, 189, 198, 237n10, 284, 292, 293, 294, 305, 316, 316n3, 323, 323n3, 325, 345, 350n20, 351n29, 432, 442-43, 445, 451; houses Joseph Smith during translation of Book of Mormon (1829), 3, 4, 191, 260, 288, 293, 331-32, 417; houses Joseph Smith (1830), 299, 322; German heritage, 282, 292, 331; letter to Joseph Smith inviting him to Fayette, 440, 441; rumor of financing Book of Mormon, 285; sells farm, gives proceeds to church, 289, 289n12

Whitmer, Sarah (Jackson), 231, 247, 247n1, 248, 249n5

Whitmer family, 132, 282, 285, 295, 316, 332; attends Zion's Church, 9, 270, 282; belief in witches, 13, 278; acquainted with Cowdery before Smith, 54; present during translation, 76; visited by David Marks, 303-304

Whitney, Orson F., 359

Willers, Diedrich, Jr., 5, 287, 298n2; publishes history of Fayette, 287, 292-95

Willers, Diedrich, Sr., 5; letter to Reverend Brethren, 270-78; to Ellen Dickinson, 281-86

Willes, Ira J., 375, 375n60

Winchester (CT), 267

Windham (NH), 377

Wisconsin, 327

Witmer, George, 9n1

Woodruff, Wilford, 111

Woodson, T. D., 70

Woodward, Beniah, 380

Woolley, Edwin G., 221

Wyl, William. *See* Wymetal, Wilhelm Ritter von

Wymetal, Wilhelm Ritter von, 333

Yale University, 356, 382

York (PA), 270

Yost, Casper, 288, 288n6

Yost, Chester, 290, 290n19

Yost, Lee, 5, 287-91, 295

Young, Brigham, 23n17, 30n12, 122, 156, 161n6, 179, 210, 242, 291

Young, Daniel, 270, 278, 278n51

Young, Phineas, 50, 179, 179n22, 200n25, 214

Young, Zina D. (Huntington), 30, 30n12

Ypsilanti (MI), 290n19

Zion (MO), 249

Zion's Church, 9, 277, 278, 282, 284

Zodiac (TX), 244

In Volume 5:

☛ **INTERVIEWS WITH BOOK OF MORMON WITNESS DAVID WHITMER, CONDUCTED BY:**

Joseph F. Smith & Orson Pratt
George Q. Cannon
Joseph Smith III
James Henry Moyle
Nathan Tanner, Jr.
William H. Kelley & George A. Blakeslee
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Zenas H. Gurley
Thomas W. Smith
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Ezra Booth
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Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery
Lucius Fenn
Parley P. Pratt
J. L. Traughber

and minutes of meetings, ordination certificates, maps, and a chronology of the Joseph Smith family, 1771-1831.

Excerpt:

I was plowing in the field one morning, and Joseph [Smith] and Oliver [Cowdery] came along with a revelation stating that I was to be one of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon. I got over the fence and we went out into the woods, near by, and sat down on a log and talked awhile … when all at once a light came down from above us and encircled us for quite a little distance around; and the angel stood before us … dressed in white … A table was set before us and on it the records … from which the Book of Mormon was translated … While we were viewing them the voice of God spoke out of heaven saying that the Book was true and the translation correct. —David Whitmer, interview, *Saints' Herald,* 1882.

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